

THE GREAT THEMES OF THE BIBLE

LOUIS
ALBERT
BANKS





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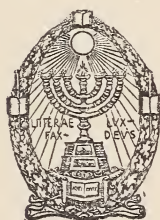
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The Great Themes of the Bible

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“The Great Sinners of the Bible,” “The Great Saints of the
Bible,” “The Great Portraits of the Bible,” “The
Great Promises of the Bible,” etc.



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TO MY FRIEND
THE REV. PURLEY A. BAKER, D.D.
THIS VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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AUTHOR'S WORD WITH THE READER

THIS volume is called "The Great Themes of the Bible" because the discourses of which it is composed deal with those deep yearnings and questionings of the soul of man which alone find their satisfaction and solace in the Bible. The themes treated here are studies of those great elemental problems which confront men and women in every age and which must find solution for each of us if the soul is to know true peace. In their delivery the blessing of God rested upon them to the comfort and consolation of many hearts, and they are given to the printed page with the author's earnest prayer that they may bring blessing to all who read them.

Very sincerely,

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS.

Delaware, Ohio, September 25, 1911.

CHAPTER I

THE ANSWER TO LIFE'S HIDDEN RIDDLE

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?—*Rev. 5. 2.*

POPE has said, "The proper study of mankind is man." And certainly no other riddle which man has tried to guess has been so hard to solve as the problem of his own origin, present status, and future career. Man himself is the sphinx of the universe when left to himself. The poet Heine is not far out of the way in his logic and reasoning for a man who throws aside the Bible and the divine Christ around whom the Bible gathers. In one of his poems he makes fun of the man who expects an answer to the questions which the unaided human mind is forever asking of the universe and of himself. He declares that a man is a fool who expects to get an answer to those great questions of What? Whence? and Whither? which men are forever asking concerning themselves. He pictures a man standing by the sea and looking out across the waves at night with the intolerable longing of his soul to know about himself and the purpose of his being, and the hope, if there be hope, of his career:

By the sea, by the desert night-covered sea,
Standeth a youth,
His breast full of sadness, his head full of doubtings,
And with gloomy lips he asks of the billows:
"O answer me life's hidden riddle. . . .
Tell me what signifies man?
From whence doth he come? And where doth he go?
Who dwelleth amongst the golden stars yonder?"
The billows are murmuring their murmur eternal,
The wind is blowing, the clouds are flying,
The stars are twinkling, all listless and cold,
And a fool is awaiting an answer.

This is a very natural view of the universe and of man if you shut out the Bible and the Christ who illuminates the Bible and for whom the Bible was written. We must never forget, when we think of the Bible, that Christ is its core. The Bible finds its reason in Christ. It was written by many different writers, under every conceivable condition and circumstance. Some of its records have their origin so remote that we lose the trail of human evidence. All we know is that we have them and that the presence of the living God is in them. The Bible was written in different languages by men living many hundreds of years apart. Some of it is history, some philosophy, some poetry, some prophecy. It deals with everything, human and divine. It talks of God and of angels as well as of men and women. It is a natural book, in which the sun shines and the moon and the stars give their

light. It is a book where the birds sing, where the grass grows green on the hillside, where the cows low in the evening, where the lion roars in the night, and the flowers lift their heads to greet the sunrise in the morning. The Bible is all that. But, above all, it is the Book of Jesus Christ. Begin back in the very first book with God's promise to Eve, and later to Abraham, and you may trace a scarlet trail across every book, over the hills and through the valleys of kingdoms and peoples, a trail that is ever growing plainer and broader, until after a while, in the Psalms and in Isaiah, it gets to be a great highway leading, always leading, with an ever-increasing number of signboards, pointing onward to the cross on Calvary, where Jesus Christ gave himself as a ransom for the sins of the world; and follow down the way beyond Calvary, through the Acts of the Apostles and their writings, up to the last word in the book of Revelation, and every hand, and every new convert, and every new people surrendering to Christianity points backward to the cross on Golgotha's rugged summit, where Jesus died for men. Christ is the center of the Bible and he is its key, and the Bible and Christ give us the key to the sealed book of man's riddle.

I

In the Bible and the Christ of the Bible we

have the answer to the hidden riddle of man's origin and purpose. In the poem which I quoted from Heine he cries:

"O answer me life's hidden riddle. . . .

Tell me what signifies man?

From whence doth he come? And where doth he go?

Who dwelleth amongst the golden stars yonder?"

Open your Bible and the very first word tells you, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Read onward and it will tell you how light came out of darkness, how chaos came to order, how mountains reared themselves in the midst of the sea, and the continents of the dry land appeared. It will tell you how the grass grew on the plains and valleys, how the trees budded and bloomed and spread their branches on the tablelands and mountains, how the fish came in the seas, how the birds and animal life filled the air and the woods and the wide extended prairies. It will tell you how the heavens stretched above, with the dial plate of the great clock of time marked by sun and moon and stars. It will tell you, farther, that after it was all done—this beautiful world, with its sweet atmosphere, and its glory of sunshine after rain—a council was held in heaven, and the heavenly Father, communing, said, "Let us make man in our image and likeness." And so man came forth into this new home which had been fitting for

him through the ages. This is man's significance. He is the child of the ever-living God; he was made to have dominion over the world, to master it, and govern it, and occupy it, and make it the theater of beauty and blessing. He is not a clod of the earth; there is in him a kinship to heaven. The breath of God is in him; he is God's son. This is man's great significance.

II

It is only in the Bible and the Christ of the Bible that we can find an answer to the riddle of sin, atonement for sin, and pardon for sin. When we read the Bible and learn of man's creation as a free moral agent, with power to choose, with will to do the right or the wrong, we come to understand what sin is. We know then why it is that when we disobey God and break his laws, whether it be the law of gravitation, or the law of our own bodies, or the law of love in relation to our fellow men, there is something in our own breast which we have learned to call conscience that has its own judge and jury and prosecutes us at its bar, and gives us fear, and warning of peril, and remorse for the evil thing which we have done. We come to know that sin is a rebellion against the law of Him who made us, and who has a right to our service. In the light of that knowledge we come to understand the atone-

ment of Jesus Christ. Few writers in literature have had such a clear understanding of the atonement as Victor Hugo. In that oft-quoted incident in "Les Misérables" he puts the truth in the story of the escaping convict, Jean Valjean, who had been graciously entertained by the kindly old bishop, and, waking in the night, under the mastery of his old passions and wicked habits, had robbed the good bishop of his silver candlesticks and had fled. Later, when the police caught and brought him back with the candlesticks in his possession, the bishop said: "Why should he not take them? They are his." Then, when the astonished officers of the law had retired, the good man leaned forward and looked the poor, miserable, amazed thief in the face and said, "Jean Valjean, I have bought you from yourself; go, and be a better man." There is the essence of the gospel of the atonement. Christ's forgiveness buys us from ourselves, and lifts us into a higher life.

I wish to emphasize with all the power I have this mightiest truth of the gospel, that Christ is the only key that will unlock the riddle of man's sin and bring pardon and forgiveness. Some years ago Dr. Henry van Dyke wrote a very beautiful little Christmas story entitled "The Lost Word." It gives a striking account of a young man named Hermas, the son of Demetrius, who

became a Christian. Because of this, his father, a man of large wealth, disinherited him. He became a disciple of John, the dearest friend of Jesus, and at last, wearied of his discipleship and utterly discouraged, he wanders back into the vicinity of his old home. There he meets a magician, who reads his fortune in a leaf, and finally promises that if he will give him but one word out of his vocabulary he will restore him to the joy that once was his. The promise is at last made, and suddenly Hermas is in his home again without the one word, and the one word is the name of his Lord. He finds his father dying and the old man welcomes his return and cries out: "My son, when you left me you found something that made your life beautiful. Mine has been a failure; will you not tell me what I must do now, for I am to die?" And unconsciously the boy began, "Father, you must believe in—" and, behold, the word had gone from him. He had parted with it, and he stands shamefaced in the presence of his dying father. He marries a beautiful girl and God gives them a lovely child. They are seated one day in the garden with their hearts overflowing with gratitude, when the wife suggests that they kneel down and express their thanks for all their treasures, and again he begins, "We thank thee, O—" and speech fails him, for he has sold his Lord and he cannot even recall his

name. He is a competitor in the chariot races and wins the prize, but cares nothing for it, because his heart is heavy. He takes his little son in the chariot with him and whirls about the course. The horses become unmanageable and the child is thrown from the chariot and seriously injured. Nearer dead than alive, he is carried back to their luxurious home, and the father kneels down by his bedside. There is no hope now except in prayer. He cried out, "Spare him, O spare him, O—." And there is no word to fill the place, for he has sold his Lord. Then suddenly his old friend, the beloved disciple John, appears, and after tears of repentance he is restored again to his priceless position. The lost word, the name of Christ his Saviour, is his again, and in his name heaven's forgiveness is unlocked and his peace restored.

It may be that I now speak to some who find their own story in substance told in this story of "The Lost Word." It may be that in an unguarded moment, because of your love for the world, and your desire for worldly riches and worldly power, you parted with your Saviour, who alone can give peace and satisfaction to your soul. If that be true, I preach you the mercy of God who gives men a second chance when they come in the name of Jesus. My friend, Dr. Alfred J. Hough, of Vermont, has recently writ-

ten a poem entitled "The God of Another Chance," which ought to be a message of hope to your soul:

A man named Peter stumbled bad,
Lost all the love he ever had,
Fouled his own soul's divinest spring,
Cursed, swore, and all that sort of thing.
He got another chance, and then
Reached the far goal of Godlike men.

Your boy goes wrong, the same as he
Who fed swine in the far country;
He seems beyond the utmost reach
Of hearts that pray, of lips that preach;
Give him another chance and see
How beautiful his life may be.

Paul cast the young man, Mark, aside,
But Barnabas his metal tried,
Called out his courage, roused his vim
And made a splendid man of him.
Then Paul, near death, longed for one glance
At Mark, who had another chance.

King David one dark day fell down,
Lost every jewel from his crown;
He had another chance and found
His kingly self redeemed, recrowned.
Now lonely souls and countless throngs
Are shriven by his deathless songs.

Far-fallen souls, rise up, advance,
Ours is the God of one more chance.

III

The riddle of man's peace and abiding happiness finds its answer in Jesus Christ. In him we see a man with none of this world's wealth,

not ministered to by others, but ministering to others with constant humility and love, and yet we find in him the supreme optimist of the ages. Nothing could cast him down into despair. No persecution, no abuse, no pain, no sorrow, nothing the world could do to him could put him into despair. What was the secret of his peace? What was the secret of that abiding joy that nothing could overcome or destroy? The secret was unselfish service. His life was a constant ministration of mercy to the poor and the tempted and the sick. His heart and life flowed out, a stream of unselfish love. Therefore was he glad and his heart at peace. Unselfishness is the supreme heroism. It is not by getting but by giving that we tap the fountain of supreme joy. Some one says that a man who stands where into his life there flows out of the past a great stream of benefit which he absorbs and retains is like one of those thirsty plains into which flows and disappears a mountain stream. The stream has trickled down in rain from heaven, in snow from the mountain top, and in melting ice in the glacier bed. In frost it has riven rocks asunder. In the avalanche and the glacier it has plowed and planed the mountain side. It has leaped the precipice, tunneled the ravine, and flowed along its turbulent way, until, reaching the plain which it has strewn with the sediment and soil of a hundred

centuries, it laughs and shines and reflects the clouds of heaven from under the trees which it sustains, amidst the grass of the fields which it fertilizes. So on its way it goes, rejoicingly, until it reaches a dry and thirsty land, riven and rent and undermined by the earthquake and the volcano. There the stream sinks into the barren sands, which are watered but not fertilized. On the one side of the line are sparkling waters and green fields, on the other side a desert. Such is the life of a man who says, "I am my own, and what comes to me is mine." He is a desert that drinks up the stream of happiness like a sponge of sand, but no true joy nor abiding peace can blossom and bear fruit in his soul. Alongside a man like that, hear Paul crying, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ," and let a man feel that as Paul felt it, and let him pour out his life in unselfishness in the service of his fellow men, and he not only blesses them, but his own happiness is assured.

Unselfishness is the great key to human peace and triumphant joy. Mr. Bingham, the mine inspector of Illinois, tells a story connected with a cave-in that took place in an Illinois coal mine. The earth and coal, in settling, had imprisoned sixty men. But there was left an opening between where they stood and the outer world through

which a small boy could barely crawl. The foreman of the rescuing party said to Fred Evans, a boy who worked on the dump: "You are just small enough to crawl through that opening and drag a pipe with you. If you get that pipe in there we shall be able to pump air through it to the men to keep them alive until we dig them out. But you have to be mighty careful in crawling through, because if you jostle the coal, it will settle down on you and instantly crush out your life. Are you willing to try it?" The boy's face was black with coal soot, his hands bruised from toil; he had been so poor all his life that he had never been able to learn to read and write, but at the same time he was supporting his mother. He looked straight into the foreman's eyes, and replied, "I'll try my best."

The boy stripped off all the clothing he could spare, put a rough cap on his head, grabbed the end of the pipe, and began his six-hundred-foot crawl in a race against death. Time and again the pipe ceased to move, and those at the outer end thought the boy had been entrapped, but it would start up again, and at last a faint call through it announced the lad's safe arrival. For a week milk, air, and water were forced through that pipe, and then the sixty men and the heroic boy were restored to their families.

The governor of Illinois, hearing of the boy's

unselfish heroism, sent for him. "Youngster," said the governor, "the State of Illinois wants to recognize your unselfishness and your pluck. What can I do for you?" Fred Evans nervously twitched his fingers about his cap and looked frightened at the big man who spoke so kindly to him. But finally, finding his voice, he replied, "I would like to know how to read." I need not tell you that that boy got his education and I am happy to tell you that he is now an intelligent and successful farmer in Illinois. But I beg you not to overlook the secret of his happy life. It was born when he seized his opportunity to risk his life and consecrate everything he had to unselfish service. Let me repeat it again, that the secret of happiness is not in getting, but in giving, and it is Jesus Christ who reveals it to us.

A writer in one of our magazines brings out very beautifully that the greatest givers in our time are not the millionaires but the men and women who give themselves, and he illustrates it with Phillips Brooks, who founded no college and endowed no hospital, but who is to be counted among the greatest givers of his time. Other men poured out wealth lavishly for good and great ends, and are worthy of all honor, but it was the high privilege of the great preacher to give himself with the prodigality of a man possessed of a vast treasure; to pour himself out year after year

on the spirits of morally confused, wayward, starving people, to whom he gave a vision beyond the perplexities of the hour, a clear view of the right path and strength to walk in it, the bread which feeds the soul. And no man who ever caught a glimpse of the great joy of Phillips Brooks in such service will ever doubt that unselfish service is the answer to the riddle of man's peace. But Phillips Brooks learned it from his Lord. Jesus Christ, the great giver brought no money, clothes, or food with him. No man ever had less at his command those things of which men usually make gifts; he was, during the wonderful years of his active life, penniless and homeless; but he was incomparably the greatest giver who has appeared among men. No one of all the great benefactors of mankind has approached him in the reach, power, and eternal value of his gifts. The secret of his divine generosity is in the sublime fact that he was, himself, a gift. And O, the sublime joy of Jesus Christ! When he started on his last journey to Jerusalem to be crucified there was such a glow of heavenly peace on his face that his friends could not understand it, for he had told them he was going there to die. It was for the joy that was set before him that he marched straight to Pilate's hall and to the cross.

I pray that God may teach us the great lesson. You want to find your true significance as a man

or as a woman. You want to fill your place in creation. You want that sublime peace, that noble joy, which comes from the consciousness that you are not beating the air, but that you are answering the purpose God has for you in the world. The answer to the riddle is in giving yourself in loving service for your fellow men. As you approach Jesus Christ in unselfishness and love, you will approach his sublime peace and his triumphant joy that nothing can disturb. In that service we shall catch the new song in our hearts and go singing down the avenues of the New Year.

Quit you like men, be strong;

There's a burden to bear,

There's a grief to share,

There's a heart that breaks 'neath a load of care—
But fare ye forth with a song.

Quit you like men, be strong;

There's a battle to fight,

There's a wrong to right,

There's a God who blesses the good with might—
So fare ye forth with a song.

Quit you like men, be strong;

There's a work to do,

There's a world to make new,

There's a call for men who are brave and true—
On! on with a song!

Quit you like men, be strong;

There's a year of grace,

There's a God to face,

There's another heat in the great world race—
Speed! speed with a song!

CHAPTER II

THE WALL OF FIRE

For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her.—*Zech. 2. 5.*

THIS text was uttered more than five hundred years before the birth of Christ, a short time after the return of the exiles from Babylon. It was a most discouraging and dismal time. The city was in ruins and the people were but a wreck of their former strength and courage. God gave these people two prophets for their encouragement and inspiration. One of these was Haggai, an old man, and the other was this Zechariah, a younger man, full of all youthful enthusiasm. It has been said that he was the most uniformly hopeful of all the prophets. His little book is the work of a youthful, imaginative mind, richly endowed with poetic gifts, as well as steeped in the diviner fount of inspiration. He saw all things bathed in the glory of the morning. This young prophet paints one picture after another of the glorious things which were nigh. The vision from which our text is taken begins with the prophet's glimpse of a man going to the site of the ruined Jerusalem in order to measure it. He has a measuring line with which to mark out the

length and breadth of the ancient city. It is a gloomy and hopeless sort of a task, for the temple once so glorious and the scene of so much sacred splendor is but a pile of ruins. The old walls are broken down; and what houses stand in the city are for the most part without inhabitants. The old people among the exiles coming back are in despair at the sight of the ruins, and the young people, who have been born during the captivity, and who have heard so much from their parents concerning Jerusalem as the city of God, are, of course, greatly disappointed at what they see.

In the prophet's vision, when he saw the young man with the measuring line, and he told him he was going to measure Jerusalem, there appeared two angels, who, listening to what the measurer said, one called to the other and told him, in substance, to run and overtake the young man and tell him that he would not be able to measure Jerusalem, that his measuring line was too short for the new Jerusalem. The City of God that was to be would be so great that it would be impossible to wall it in. It would spread abroad in every direction, and it would not need walls of stone, for God himself would be a wall of fire about it, and his presence would be the glory in the midst of the city.

I think we may find in this picture a theme of great comfort and inspiration for ourselves; in-

deed, most of it must apply to ourselves. It was evidently not intended to apply to the local city of Jerusalem. Never did that city become the joy of the whole earth. The city of Zechariah's dreams was never built; never did all nations crowd into it as he hoped. It still has its little narrow walls and is to-day in the hands of alien masters. But out of Jerusalem has come the city without walls. From those ruins sprang Christianity, which is the fulfillment of the dream of the young prophet. It, therefore, belongs to us, and across the gulf of more than two thousand years the young Zechariah speaks to us these words of inspiration.

I

First of all, we may well apply our text to our civic and national life. It should teach us that our strength is not in numbers, nor in wealth, nor in naval or military power, but in the quality of our people; in the fact that we are such a people as God can defend, and in the midst of whom he may be the inspiration and the glory. We have recently taken our census, and some cities and some States are inclined to boast a good deal concerning their growth in numbers or in material wealth, and we are in danger of forgetting that such things have never made any nation secure. Greece and Rome and all the old nations that

once were glorious and have passed into decay were most populous and most wealthy and most powerful when they were nearest their ruin. True greatness of a city or a State or a nation is not the kind that you can measure with a measuring line or with a census-taker's notebook. It does not depend upon quantity so much as upon quality. The greatness of a people does not depend upon their numbers so much as upon their virtues; it does not depend upon their wealth so much as upon their character, their devotion to God, their fidelity to true manhood and true womanhood. If God is like a wall of fire around a city or a nation, if he dwells in the midst of the people and is their true pride and glory, then that people is safe. But if we care more for money than we do for men; if we care more for business than we do for children; if we care more for material things than we do for pleasing God, then there is no power in military force or naval strength that can save the nation. The American people need to hear the message that Rudyard Kipling sounded in the ears of the English people at the time of Queen Victoria's jubilee:

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine:
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart:
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away,
On dune and headland sinks the fire;
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget;

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not thee in awe,
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the law:
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard;
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not thee to guard:
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on thy people, Lord!

We may well apply our theme to the Christian church of our day. If the church is to win and do its great work to-day as in the past, it must be because God is a wall of fire about it and his presence is the glory in the midst. The church, like the state, is always tempted to believe that its strength is in material things, and it was perhaps never more tempted than to-day. Robertson

Nicoll recently wrote that the temptations of the modern church are practically the same as the temptations of Jesus during his lifetime. The devil said to Christ when he was an hungered, that the most important thing in the world was to command that the stones be made bread, that he might feed himself. But Jesus quoted the Word of God, that man should not live by bread alone, and that the divine Word was infinitely more important to him than bread for his trembling body. We are in the midst of that same temptation in the Christian Church to-day, the temptation to satisfy our consciences by caring only for the material interests of men and women. It is not hard to find large church plants where the soup kitchen and the gymnasium attract far more attention than the pulpit or the prayer room. This has been born of a tempter who said that "Man's primary concern and first claim must be to have all his physical wants supplied; and so long as there is hunger, or thirst, or cold, or nakedness, or sickness, or pain in the world, the heavenly Voice which speaks of sonship to God must be stilled. It will be time enough to introduce the higher life when the lower has been thoroughly secured." Over against that, Jesus Christ says, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Another temptation of the church to-day is paralleled in the temptation with which the people approached Christ. They begged Jesus for signs. They promised him their souls if he would make a sufficiently overpowering impression on their senses. If he would only make them see and hear wonderful things that would make their hair stand on end with curious terror, then they would be his disciples. The devil also said to him, "Cast yourself down from the temple." But Christ never yielded to that temptation. All his signs were works of love. Now, the same temptation besets the church to-day. It is born of the desire to get the crowd, which is a most holy desire if our one motive is to win them to Christ. But it is easy to attract the crowd and nothing be done to God's purpose. The temptation in its cruder form is to bald sensationalism; in its more refined form it is to the æsthetic or artistic development of worship. And this is often effective, and often means just as little as the sensationalism for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

There is still another temptation which was also one of the temptations of Christ. Christ saw the marvelous power which evil had in the world. It had immense resources. The temptation was this: Was it not possible to make use of evil somehow? Was there not some craft or policy by which the loan of it might be taken for a time?

by which its right to exist might be recognized, temporarily, of course, and under conditions so that the Son of God might profit by it till it became practicable for him to do without it? (Exactly the same thing as licensing the liquor traffic to help pay the school bills or pave the rock roads, until we can get along without it.) It was Satan boasting of his power and offering it to Christ on terms which meant the complete prostration of his mission. In the passion with which Jesus repels this temptation, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" we seem to hear him saying to himself what he says to us all, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose himself?"

The application of this temptation to the church is painfully plain. It teaches that the only power in which the work of God can be done is the power of God. When Israel made alliance with outside and wicked tribes it meant her ruin; and so to-day the patronage of a man whose character is not good does not strengthen the weakest church in town or country, no matter what his wealth or social or political position may be. No, you cannot measure a church with a tape-line. You cannot measure the strength of a church by counting its numbers, or the wealth of its membership, or the social position of its congregation. You cannot measure it that way because its power is spiritual; its walls are not of

stone. If the church is indeed safe, it is because God is a wall of fire about it, and he dwells in the midst of it, its true glory.

I should like to apply this to our own local church. I would to God that we, every one of us, could see and feel that what we need above everything else to make our own church true to the mission of Jesus Christ in this world is not more of material things but more of the spiritual presence. What we need to draw men and women to us in multitudes to hear the gospel is, above everything else, that the spirit of the ever-living God shall be the glory in the midst of us, and that the wall of divine fire shall be round about us. All this is within our reach, for God not only inhabiteth eternity, he not only dwells in the high and lofty places, but he loves the humble and the contrite heart. There is one place where a man may make sure that the glorious presence of Jesus Christ will always be with him, and that is where with loving tenderness he seeks to win his fellow man away from his sins to repentance and surrender to Christ as his Lord and Redeemer. Give us the passion of the soul-savers, and our church will have a wall of fire about it and a glory in the midst of it that will attract the world to it. I wish we could feel what Paul felt when he said, "I wish that my soul were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the

flesh"; I wish we knew what John Knox felt when he cried, "Give me Scotland, or I die!" And God gave Scotland to John Knox.

Spurgeon once said that a bird when it is sitting on its eggs, or when the little ones are newly hatched, has about it a mother spirit, so that it devotes all of its life to the feeding of its little ones; other birds may be taking their pleasures on the wing, but this bird sits still, the livelong day and night, or its only flights are to provide for gaping mouths which seem to be never filled. A passion has taken possession of the bird; and something like it comes over the true soul-winner. He would gladly die to win souls; he pines, he pleads, he plods to bless those on whom his heart is set. If these could be saved, he would pawn half his heaven for it; aye, and sometimes, in moments of enthusiasm, he is ready to barter heaven altogether to win souls. Give us a passion like that in this church, so that we all feel that all our work connected with the church, Sunday and week day, fails of its supreme purpose unless it is redeeming the lost; unless it is winning back men and women who are in danger of eternal defeat, and nothing can stand in the way of our spiritual conquest. Earthly walls will no more be important. God will be about us, a wall of fire, and within us the altar will blaze with glory and splendor—not our glory, nor our

splendor, but the glory and the splendor of the infinite God.

III

Let us for a moment apply our text and our theme to ourselves, to the individual. The old Hebrew would not have dared do that, but under the new dispensation, every sincere follower of Jesus Christ is a king and a priest unto God, and our theme is as true of each one of us as of the state or the church. You cannot measure a man's Christianity by his profession, or by his outward or spectacular relation to the church, whether he be in the pulpit or the pew. Our religion amounts to nothing unless it brings with it an inner experience. The purpose of Christianity to you and to me is to create within us an inner life which is the glory in the midst of our life, in the midst of our career, which throws about us a wall of fire and fills us with glorious joy and triumph. Our faith in Christ is not a true faith if it does not bring into our hearts a living and vital consciousness of the presence of God. When that is true of us, the Spirit of God dwells there. Peace, purity, and love are within us, and that inward light guides us and stimulates our actions and determines our conduct day by day. It is not a question to be debated what we will do in a matter of right or wrong. We know, and other people know, that, as God gives us to see it, we will do the right.

Whatever the outer trials may be, within the soul there is peace. This glorious presence of God in the heart is the secret of the Christian life. And nothing else can really ever give peace. A little reflection makes us know that is true. Put a man into the most desirable worldly position, give him all that his fond dreams go out after, but let him be out of harmony with these surroundings which he has anticipated so gladly, and what is the result? Is he happy when his dreams are realized? No, indeed. But, on the other hand, the martyrs were cast into the dark, noisome dungeons; they were treated cruelly and subjected to every conceivable form of brutal torture, but they were not miserable. In spite of it all, they realized the truth voiced by Richard Lovelace when he says:

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage.

John Milton once sang:

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

And these poets are true to life. You cannot measure what will make human happiness by a measuring line. You cannot add it up into columns and put a dollar mark in front of it and say like the rich fool, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," and thus guarantee

your happiness. No; happiness comes from within. It is not material but spiritual; and the power to be useful comes from within also. A man's power, his strength, is from within. The safe man, the strong man, the invincible man, is the man about whom God is a wall of fire and within whose heart God dwells as the glory in the midst.

I wonder if any of you ever saw Bella Cook in New York. She was left a widow at twenty-seven. At thirty-five she became bedridden, an absolute pauper so far as this world can see. If you had added up her financial resources, you would not have found ten cents. She had not physical strength enough to walk across the room. But she was rich in the unsearchable riches of Christ. There were no walls of money or physical power about her, but God was about her, the wall of fire, and within her, irradiating her face, speaking peace and triumph to her soul; he was the glory in the midst. She was bedridden for fifty-two years, and for all that half a century she was one of the greatest personalities in New York. Women worth millions in this world's gold often left their carriages standing in front of her humble rooms, and pillowed their heads on her bed and sobbed out their hearts while Bella Cook prayed for them. She became the center of a great charitable work. Through the money God

sent she reached out into the cellars and byways of the poorest sections of a great, wicked city with streams of blessing, and for over half a century, as a sort of illustration of the divine power to beautify a helpless life, God made her existence a perpetual inspiration to faith in him.

May God give us this great lesson to-day. Let us not go away counting up our resources in physical strength or wealth, and leaving out of account the strength that never fails and the wealth that no panic can change or lose. Some of you will never be strong again in the kind of strength that you once knew in your youth, but you may be secure with the wall of fire about you. Some of us will never have much money, and all our lives we may have to deny ourselves many of the luxuries that other people rejoice in, but we may be rich in the coin that alone can purchase true happiness and peace in life or death. We may not be able to do for the world what we would like to do, but if the ever-living God is the glory in the midst of our hearts, sweetening and beautifying our character and conduct, we shall be able to bring blessing and hope to everyone that comes in living touch with us. I covet for myself and I covet for every one of you, more than any earthly good, that the ever-living God shall be a wall of fire about us, and that he shall be the glory in our midst. O, if we may only lose our self-seeking

in our supreme desire to show Christ as the "Glory in the midst," then in his own good time we shall come to our reward and shall realize what the poet sings of one such faithful servant of Christ:

He held the lamp of truth that day
So low that none could miss the way;
And yet so high to bring in sight
That picture fair, the world's true Light,
And gazing up, the lamp between,
The hand that held it scarce was seen.

He held the pitcher, stooping low,
To lips of little ones below;
Then raised it to the weary saint,
The weak, the weary, or the faint.
They drank—the pitcher thus between,
The hand that held it scarce was seen.

But when the Captain says, "Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant. Come!
Lay down the pitcher and the lamp,
Lay down the trumpet—leave the camp"—
Thy weary hands will then be seen
Clasped in those pierced ones—naught between.

CHAPTER III

AN OLD PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.—*Rev. 1. 12, 13.*

THIS text is connected with the most wonderful word picture of Christ to be found anywhere in the Bible. In the Gospels there is no attempt anywhere to describe the personal appearance of Jesus, but here, in figurative language, we have a wonderful portrait of the Master. No man on earth, in that day, knew more perfectly the appearance of Christ than John. It was John who was known in the group of Christ's friends as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." But even John, when he comes to paint the portrait of his Master, does it in figurative language which describes the spiritual rather than the physical. It is a wonderful portrait, this Christ of the candlesticks, with his snow-white hair, and his golden girdle, and eyes flaming like fire, and feet shining like burnished brass, and his voice like many waters, a hand full of stars, his speech like a glittering sword, his countenance flashing like the sun, and holding the keys of eternal destiny. Surely here

is a picture to awaken our awe and inspire our study.

I

The first thought that challenges us from this theme is the description which is given of the head of Christ, "And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow." We have suggested here the purity of Christ's thought and wisdom, as well as the nobility of his thought. No other man in history has approached Christ as a thinker on a high and lofty plane, and yet Jesus never traveled save on foot, or on the back of a donkey, and then never outside the little land of Palestine, which was much smaller than the State of Missouri. He was the son of a poor village carpenter and never had any opportunities for schooling except such as would come to the ordinary Hebrew child in the synagogue. And yet at thirty years of age he uttered thoughts of such authority and power that they lead the highest thought of the world to-day. In the Sermon on the Mount there are stated truths of social and religious importance that the very foremost thinkers, after two thousand years of progress in civilization, can barely understand and have not the courage to apply fully to the solution of the problems of our own time. No other man has ever approached the Sermon on the Mount for purity and nobility of thought, and importance

of statement; but even that Jesus Christ surpassed in his last great address to his disciples. The greatest minds in every department of human effort have bowed low before the white thought of Jesus Christ. Shakespeare and Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Bacon, and Milton put the wreath of their honor and their reverence on the head of Jesus Christ. Jean Paul Richter says that Christ, "The holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, lifted with his pierced hands empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages." The world in its thinking has never caught up with Jesus Christ. The great men of one generation are surpassed by the average men of the next generation, so swiftly does the current of invention and intellectual and moral progress carry the world onward; but Jesus is as far ahead to-day as he was a thousand years ago. It is because he is not a mere man; he is the God-man, and his divine thought leads and masters the race. Tennyson sings:

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo! thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them thine.

II

We have suggested the burning vision of Jesus Christ. "And his eyes were as a flame of fire." Vision is the most wonderful thing in the world. Just the ordinary, common vision of the eye is one of the most glorious gifts of God. We can never be grateful enough for the eyes God has given us. Our eyes are cameras that go on taking pictures all day long. The kinetoscope that gives us the moving pictures seems a great invention, but both the camera and the kinetoscope are very poor things in comparison with the eye of the ordinary boy or girl. But there is a vision higher than that—a vision of the mind; a vision of the soul, a vision that sees into the heart of things. A vision like that which the poet has, or the artist, showing what our eyes have taken photographs of, when we see it through their eyes, whether painted on the canvas or illuminated in the poem, seems to us to be infinitely exalted and enlarged in its beauty. How beautiful the world must have looked to Jesus Christ! What a glorious thing it must have been to stroll through the fields, and across the pastures, and through the woods with Jesus, and to hear him talk about trees

and flowers and birds! We have some of his words in the Gospels; but how little we have you can imagine when one of his disciples says that if they had written down everything Jesus said, the whole world could not have contained the books. That, of course, is an exaggerated form of statement, but by it he means to suggest to us that those beautiful stories and parables which we have in the Gospels, and which are the admiration and illumination of the ages, are only here and there a rare jewel picked up out of the great mine of the Saviour's conversation.

But Jesus had a higher vision still. Those eyes that flamed like fire looked into the hearts of men and women and saw what other people did not see. At a glance Jesus saw the goodness of Nathanael and cried aloud, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Passing through Jericho, Jesus looked up into the sycamore tree where Zacchæus, the hated taxgatherer, sat crouched on its limb, and, looking deep into his eyes, the Master saw the hunger of his soul for goodness, and called him down out of the tree, and through the sneering crowd that could see nothing but a cheat and a grafter in Zacchæus, Christ went home with him and brought salvation to his house. Christ went over to Gadara, and beneath the demon-like conduct of the wild man whom everybody feared, Christ saw a beautiful evangel

of his gospel, and called him forth from his imprisonment of evil. In Saul, the wicked young bigot, on his way to Damascus, Christ saw the possible Paul, the hero and the saint, and redeemed him. In that poor lost woman who was about to be stoned to death, the clear-eyed vision of Christ saw the beautiful womanhood lying dormant, and bravely brought it forth into being, and gave to her a character fragrant with incense while time shall last. O thou Christ of the flaming eyes, look deep into our hearts, make us conscious of thy vision! Give us a glimpse of the loveliness which thou seest possible for us, that we may awaken to our privileges in thee!

III

In the shining feet which were like burnished brass heated in the furnace we have suggested the glory which Christ puts on service of humanity. Christ revolutionized the world when he washed the feet of his disciples and declared that the new order should be different from the old. He tells his disciples that among worldly men the great man was ministered to and taken care of, but under the new order the man who would be great must also be minister and servant. Christ brought heaven's best down to minister to earth's lowest and poorest. And so he started in the world the ministry of the strong for the weak;

of the pure for the sinful; of the rich for the poor. The foundation stone of every hospital on the globe, of every orphan asylum, of every old-couples' home, of every house of refuge and mercy that ministers to men and women in sickness and age and weakness, was laid that day when the Christ of the towel declared the new order of the ministry of the highest for the lowest.

Christ established a new order of greatness—the great servant. And the world has caught up this new idea of what constitutes true greatness in a remarkable degree. Call over the men and women whom the world has specially enthroned in its heart as immortal representatives of the race in the last century or two, and you will find that there is no Cæsar, nor Napoleon, nor world-monster who fed on lust of power simply, among them. No; they are the men like Washington, who would not be a king, but was always ready to serve his country at his own charges; men like Lincoln, whose broad shoulders were pushed under the heaviest loads the government ever had to carry. There were no other shoulders broad enough to carry the burdens through those years of national agony. He was not brilliant, he was not handsome, he was awkward and backwoods-like and ugly; but he so served the people that by the universal franchise of American hearts he became the most beautiful and glorious citizen of

the republic. He became so because he was its greatest servant. A hundred princes lived, and were petted, and in their turn sickened and died in the days of John Howard. The world will never think of them again, and would not know their names if they were recalled. They were ministered ^{by} ~~to~~ a hundredfold more than he, therefore they are forgotten. But he, who put aside ease, and luxurious comfort, and, facing all manner of opposition, went down into prison and dungeon, making the cause of hated and forgotten criminals his very own, until, like Paul, he felt that he was bound with them in chains, became one of the world's heroes and immortals. He became such because he had been one of its truest and most unselfish servants.

In the days of the Crimea England was full of women who were ministered to by unlimited luxury and wealth, and whose smiles dazzled the social world. They have long been forgotten. But the English girl who left home and friends and went out among the suffering and desponding and wounded soldiers, and served them with a self-sacrifice and a devotion that was like her divine Lord, made the name of Florence Nightingale not only immortal, but caused it to be "like ointment poured forth" as long as time shall last. She is crowned because she was the greatest servant of her time.

The greatest scientist, in the opinion of the rank and file of mankind, during the last generation, was Pasteur, because it was he who helped the world to cleanse its drinking water, and pluck the virus out of the bite of the mad dog, and give a better chance to save childhood. He was the greatest servant science gave the world in his day. And so, my friends, there is one place where you may be sure to find Jesus Christ, and that is wherever you give yourself to humble and loving service for your fellows. Whenever we do that we shall realize the poet's vision:

I bend to help a little straying child
And soothe away its fears,
When, lo, the Wondrous Babe, all undefiled,
Looks at me through its tears.

Beside a cot I kneel with pitying eyes;
A dying brow I fan—
The pallet seems a cross, and on it lies
One like the Son of man!

The way is long, and when I pause to share
My cup, my crust of bread,
With some poor wanderer—O vision rare—
A halo crowns his head!

O'er sin's dark stream there comes a drowning cry;
Its woeful tide I stem,
And grasp for one who sinks—the Christ is there,
I touch his garment's hem.

O Presence, ever new and ever dear,
My Master, can it be,
In thy great day of coming, I shall hear,
"Thou didst it unto me"?

IV

We have also suggested the authority of Jesus. His speech is like a sword, his voice like the noise of many waters, in one hand he holds the stars, and in the other the keys of destiny. We have been having a strange and disconcerting question sounded recently in our religious papers and magazines, asking whether our Lord was Jesus or Christ. Thank God, he is both. Canon Henson well says that the identification of Jesus and Christ took place at the very beginning of Christianity. It is the obvious assumption of all the New Testament writers, and almost immediately it received its formal expression in the double name of Jesus Christ, as is often used in the New Testament. The disciples were led to believe in Jesus as the Christ by their own close intimacy with him during his ministry. There is no reasonable doubt that before the crucifixion he had claimed to be the Christ, and that they had indorsed his claim. Jesus himself had challenged them on the point, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" he had asked them. And when they had replied by stating the various opinions respecting him which were current among the people, he asks again, "But whom say ye that I am?" To that question Peter made answer in the tremendous confession, "Thou art the Christ." That was the first Christian creed: "I believe that

Jesus is the Christ." To separate the two names and propose a choice between them is to stultify the witness of the apostles from the first.

Christ never spoke with such many-toned authority as at present. He never spoke so strongly in philosophy as to-day. All the great philosophies that stood up against Jesus have gone down in defeat. He never spoke so powerfully in science as now, when all the greatest scientists bow reverently before him. He has long been the dominant voice in art, in poetry, and literature. We have already seen how he dominates the social world in the problems of men's relations to each other; but in the greatest of all realms—in the individual human soul—Christ speaks with authority and holds the keys of eternal destiny. It is only Christ who has power to come into a man's heart and cause his own vitality for righteousness to become the red blood in the man's nature, casting off all evil things.

Some of you have been where you have seen the scrub oak in winter time. You have noticed how it was the last of all the trees of the wood to lose its leaves. Indeed, it never loses its leaves by the mere force of the winter. Storms sweep over the woods, but the scrub-oak leaves, yellow and withered and dead, cling as tight as ever. The great storms shake the trees, but the leaves seem to laugh back grimly in the teeth of the

storm; the sharp cold comes on and the frost, keen and cutting, cleans every other tree, but the scrub-oak leaves grit their teeth and stay on. Neither frost nor storm has power to take away the leaves of this tough little tree. But if you watch as the winter draws to a close, when the frost begins to lose its grip, and the sun rises high in the heavens and delays its sunset at eventime, the life comes pulsing up the oak tree and the sap pushes out into the branches clear to the finger tips, where the leaves of last year have so stubbornly held their own, and then you see them beginning to drop off; the life within is pushing them off.

So, my friend, you see a man trying to quit his bad habits, and you sympathize with him, for you know he is sincere and honest, and truly desires to get rid of the habits that shame him and hurt him; but he fails. All sorts of reformatory methods are tried. A godly father or mother prays for him. His wife pleads and weeps and prays. Sometimes many friends with combined efforts seek to hedge him about and strengthen him for righteousness, so that he may shed these wicked habits from which he longs to be free. But all fail. Then, some day, this man comes into the presence of Jesus Christ, and through some divine appeal he opens his heart and lets the Christ into his soul, and lo, like the scrub-oak

tree in the springtime, whose leaves are pushed off by the new lifeblood within, this man suddenly loses his sins, and his wicked habits, and puts out new leaves and new blossoms, full of fragrance of love and goodness. He casts off the old habits because within him the lifeblood from heaven pushes off the old leaves of his evil life and sends forth the new growth which is of Christ. Ah, no one speaks with authority in the human soul like Jesus Christ.

Mr. Moody went one day to the Fulton Street prayer meeting in New York city and a man who heard him speak came to him and said, "Will you go to the Tombs to-morrow and preach?" Mr. Moody agreed to do so, and went, supposing the prisoners would be brought into the chapel; but, to his horror, he found he had to speak to them in their cells. He had never tried that. It was hard work to preach to people he could not see. There were two rows of cells above him and one below, and he stood and talked to some four hundred prisoners in that way.

Afterward he thought he would like to look at his audience, and he went to the door of the first cell. There was a little window to let light and air in, and there were two in that cell playing cards. He had no doubt they had been playing cards all the time he was preaching. Moody said to them, "How did you come here?" "We got

into bad company," said one, "and the man who did the deed got free, but we got in." At another cell the prisoner said: "I am going to have a new trial; I don't belong here. A man went into court and swore a lie." Mr. Moody said he never found so many innocent men in all his life, and he made up his mind that human nature is the same under lock and key as outside. "Well," he said to the jailer, "I am going to go through this jail and see if I can find a sinner."

It took a long time, but at last he found a man on the lower tier, all alone. He had his face in his hands, and Mr. Moody stopped at his window and asked, "What's the trouble?"

"My sins are more than I can bear."

"Ah, thank God!" said Moody.

"You thank God that my sins are more than I can bear? Why, aren't you the man who preached to us? I thought you said you were the friend of the prisoners. I don't understand that kind of friendship."

Moody said, "I have been looking for you; I have been hunting for you." And for half an hour he preached the Christ to that man. It was like a cup of cold water to a thirsty man. He was "lost," and after he had talked a long time with him, Mr. Moody said, "Get down on your knees and we will pray."

The poor fellow said, "I can't pray." Then

he told Mr. Moody how bad he had been. His catalogue of sin was as dark and vile, as black as hell; but it was refreshing to be able to tell him that Christ is the One that cleanseth from all sin and can save unto the uttermost.

Moody said to him, "Pray."

And the poor fellow took his head away from the iron bedstead and cried to God for mercy; "O God, have mercy on me, a vile wretch."

Mr. Moody got so interested in the man that he could hardly leave him. His heart went out to him. He seemed like a brother of his, a friend. At last he said, "At night, I will be at the hotel, and between nine and ten I will be praying for you, and I want you to meet me at the mercy-seat."

That night Moody had great liberty in prayer; he was led out so in prayer that he could not take the midnight train for Chicago, and felt he must see that prisoner again. He went to the Tombs, and the officer let him talk with the prisoner; and the moment he heard Moody's voice he put his hand out through the bars and got hold of Moody's hand and pressed it, and the hot tears of joy fell over his face, as he told how that night God had come to his soul.

Ah, that is what Jesus Christ can do in a human heart. He speaks there with authority. Let him speak in your heart unto salvation!

CHAPTER IV

THE TRAVELER'S HOPE: A NEW YEAR'S SERMON

Thou art . . . thou shalt be.—*John 1. 42.*

WE are accustomed to think of the journey of life as extending from the cradle to the grave in a straight line. There are hills and valleys to be traversed; there are rivers to cross; there are oceans to sail over; but despite all its irregularities, it is for the greater part a dead-level prairie journey of routine that we conjure in our imagination when we think of the paths which the human traveler must tread from childhood to manhood, and on to old age and the sunset. The new years and the birthdays are milestones on that journey of life. Every one passed means that we are farther away from the beginning and nearer to the end of the journey. The path yet to be traveled is, of course, uncertain, as all life is uncertain, but its general characteristics are largely discounted by observation and history. We are on the way home, and multitudes are traveling with us to the same common end of the journey. We see what the poet saw when he sang:

I saw them come over the water, I saw them go down
through the land,
Some lonely on feet that were weary, some smiling,
with hand clasped in hand;

"And where are you going?" I questioned; O what do they see where they roam,
That their eyes seem to dwell on a vision? "Home home—they are traveling home!"

I saw them come out of the cities, I saw them go over the hill;

I saw little children, old people, smart sons of the forge and the mill;

The young with the feet of light dancing; the old with a yearning for rest;

"They are traveling home," said the shadow, "to lie down on the dear mother-breast!"

I saw them in shadow and sunshine, I saw them at dawn and at night,

Go on, and go on, and go over the road to the lilt of delight;

Diviner than anything human the glow on their faces who roam:

"They are traveling home," cried the shadow; "home, home—they are traveling home!"

It is a different thought of the new year and of man as a traveler that I have in my mind this morning. I speak in my thought to travelers, and not to travelers onward, only, but to travelers upward. I speak not of the journey as from youth to age, but of man's journey in character, the mountain-climbing of the soul, the progress which it is possible to make in the journey of the spirit from lower to higher levels of life.

Our text, taken in connection with its story, beautifully suggests this theme. Andrew had found Jesus Christ and loved him and believed him

to be the Messiah. He went and found Simon, his brother, and brought him to Jesus, and Jesus, who knew what was in man, and who read the human heart and mind at a glance, saw at once who it was that had come to see him. This man Simon was a bluff, frank, open-hearted man, but he was an unstable character, passionate, the creature of his impulses, whom nobody could depend upon to stick to anything long at a time—that was the kind of a man whom Andrew brought to Christ, in Simon. And Jesus, looking down into his very soul and reading his instability through and through, said to him in substance: “Thou art Simon, the unreliable, the unstable, the undependable man; but thou shalt be Cephas, or Peter, the solid rock, against which all the storms of the world and the flesh and the devil shall not be able to prevail.” What a splendid journey it was that Christ outlined for Peter! What a climb upward from the yielding, uncertain sands to the solid rock of ages, as immovable as the throne of God. Here, then, we have our theme, the traveler’s hope for the higher and holier nature; the dependable, reliable character, the splendid achievement outlined by Jesus Christ. O that God would speak to every one of our souls and say to us, “Thou art,” and let us see our frailties, our weaknesses, our imperfections, our sins, and then say to us, “Thou shalt be,” and give us a glimpse of the

solid rock of character, glorious in the light of heaven, up which it is possible, through association and fellowship with Jesus Christ, for us to climb.

I

As we face the new year, our theme ought to be a call to faith and joy. Perhaps some of you are saying to yourselves as I announce it: "I am anything but joyous now. The burdens are too heavy, the way is too dark, life is too hard to talk to me about joy." Ah, but this is only the beginning. "Thou art" sorrowful, depressed, gloomy; but if you will yield your heart to Christ and live in his spirit of faith in God and absolute reliance on him, "thou shalt be" filled with rejoicing, and life shall enlarge in beauty and peace as the days go on.

I think the most popular sin among good people is the lack of joy, lack of appreciation of the beauty and blessedness of the universe in which God has placed us, and the abundant gifts which he is constantly bestowing upon us. Paul gave it as a command, "Rejoice always," and he illustrated it in his own life. I have recently read a discourse by Dr. Robert Horton, of London, in which he calls attention to the severity with which the great mediæval teacher and poet, Dante, treats the vice of solemnness and depression of spirit. He finds in one of the circles of hell the

angry are being punished, but in the same circle are the solemn. It is a dismal lake, and floating upon the surface of the lake are these angry souls, that are literally biting and devouring one another. The guide calls his attention to the fact that upon the surface of the lake are breaking bubbles everywhere, and he says that these arise from the submerged souls of the solemn. "These are they," he says, "who in the world filled the world with sighs, and now in this world"—this world of the lost spirits—"the sighs break up from the dismal waters and form the bubbles on the surface." And then these unhappy, submerged souls explain. "We were sad," they sighed, "in the sweet air which is gladdened by the sun, carrying within us the acrid fumes; and now we are sad in this black mire." But, not content with that, when Dante gets into the circle of the violent, he surprises us by dividing them into three groups. There are the violent against their fellow men, there are the violent against themselves, and there are the violent against God. And, in his curious way, he proceeds to tell us that the violent against themselves are not only suicides, they are not only gamblers and squanderers of their faculties, but also those who mourn where they ought to be joyous. And, in his description of the violent against God, he surprises us again by including in the violent against God not only blasphemers

and the profane, not only they who are guilty of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, but also those who scorn nature and her beauty. So that, according to Dante, the solemn, melancholy, depressed mood, which sees nothing in this beautiful world to rejoice in, that treats the gift of life and its mercies as a matter of course, is a deadly sin against the love of God.

Now, over against this, Paul tells us that the Christian ought always to rejoice, and it was up into this realm of joy, which no prison or persecution was able to throttle even for a single day, that Paul came himself through association and fellowship with Jesus Christ. I doubt if there is any other call that we need to hear more clearly than this, for our usefulness in the world—the call to courage and joy through faith and reliance upon God.

II

Our theme ought to mean to us a call to the highest achievement that is possible for men and women. One of our greatest perils, that which is forever crippling our character and rendering our conduct imperfect and commonplace, is the excuses we make for ourselves, which permit us complacently to drop down into an average life, and congratulate ourselves that we are not much worse than our neighbors. There is no inspiration

in such a life. A life can be romantic and inspirational only when it is reaching up to the best that is possible. The illustrations for this thought are on every side.

I was reading recently an old Chinese proverb to the effect that, if one have a journey of twenty miles to make, he should count nineteen of those miles the first half, and the final mile he should count the second half of the journey. In an undertaking or an excursion into noble living this old Chinese proverb holds true. It is the last mile, the last measure of achievement, that counts for more than all that has gone before. Some one has well said that every individual life, however prosaic, is a great adventure, is a pushing forward into the great unknown, and the last measure of achievement counts for more than all that precedes. If we live the true life, we realize that Browning is right when he says that it is "the last of life, for which the first was made." If we do not feel that the last year of our lives counts for more than the years that preceded it, a certain consciousness of defeat inevitably takes possession of us.

The thing I want to leave in our minds and hearts is this, that it is the extra of which we are capable, that which is above what is expected of us, the overflow water of life, above the ordinary gauge of the river—it is that that we must strug-

gle for and achieve. Many horses can approach to within nineteen twentieths of the speed of those who make the record ; but unless they can do more than this they will never be permitted to enter the race track, and, so far as speed is concerned, are counted failures. You may construct a building, and it may be ever so fine ; but if it be left nineteen twentieths complete, tenants will turn from it as unfit for consideration. A man may have nineteen twentieths of the necessary qualification for a great merchant, a great railroad manager, or a great banker, but unless he can go farther than this he will not succeed, for it is in that final five per cent that success lies.

Almost anyone of an artistic temperament, if he be industrious and improve what talent he has, may paint pictures that will be very respectable, and so far as color and design are concerned, will seem to approach very closely to the masterpieces ; but if he cannot go farther than this, if he cannot compass that final, nameless something which gives it the atmosphere of genius, he will never be a great artist. A teacher may gain the esteem and good will of nineteen of her pupils, but the twentieth may cause her utter failure. A man may have poise and self-control nineteen twentieths of the time, but the lack of those virtues the other twentieth of the time may cause the breaking up of the family, the destruction of business, and

seal the absolute failure of a career. A man may resist temptation nineteen twentieths of the time and still become a criminal. One may be perfectly sane and well balanced regarding nineteen twentieths of the subjects of life, and it still be necessary to confine him for the safety of the public, so near is the line between sanity and insanity. What I am trying to put deep into our consciousness is this, that it is infinitely important that we hold ourselves under bond to aspire to the very top, the very summit of goodness and truth in character and in conduct.

It is strange that we should so shrink from the struggle for the best, strange that we should be so blind as not to see that it is the life that struggles which is interesting and full of the music and joy of achievement. Have you ever wandered in the woods in the summer time in mountainous places and listened to the rippling melody of the brook that came tossing down over the bowlders, splashing in waterfalls and rippling away in song where it was torn by the rocks? And did you never consider why it is that the brook sings its happy song under such circumstances? Ah, it is the bowlders that make the brook sing. It is the difficulties in the way; it is the obstacles which it is compelled to overcome. It is the rough and ragged rocks that tear it into foam that evoke its heavenly music.

And so, my friends, we must learn that it is not ease, nor luxury, nor placid life without struggle that awakens melody and interest and enthusiasm in life. It is friction, struggle, climbing upward, getting ever new views of life under difficulties overcome. It is there that we catch a song in our hearts, and come to know something of the joy of Him who went toward the cross on Calvary because of the joy that was set before him.

III

Our theme this morning ought to give us courage to aspire to live the gospel of Christ so that men who see us shall think of the Christ who has inspired us. See the poor, unstable Peter, so full of faults; but in association with Christ, and through his inspiration, Peter came to be a man whose very shadow as he passed by was full of healing and blessing. Principal Fairbairn says that when Samuel, the man who anointed David king, used to pass through the streets of the towns that knew him, the people fell silent, and after he had passed, they whispered one to another, "There goes a man who has seen God, who is as gracious, and kindly, and generous as the God he has seen."

An Englishman at Ningpo, China, asked a Chinaman, worshiping in his mission room, if he had ever heard the gospel before. "I have not

heard it," he said, "but I have seen it." He then told how he had seen the transformation of one of the most wicked, blasphemous opium-eaters by the power of the gospel. And the world needs that we, each of us, shall be a new incarnation of God among men, so that the divine loveliness may be made apparent through us.

In the National Gallery in London there is a very small painting by Diaz, who stole the sunbeam and went away with it, and put it into a prism, and painted what he calls "The Sunny Day in the Forest." It is a wonderful little picture painted so in the atmosphere of the sunshine that it is sunshine. One critic who looked at it says it seemed to say to him, "He that hath seen me hath seen the sun." So Christ stood out before the world and said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And it is the most glorious hope that can ever inspire our hearts that we may be so radiant with the divine love that men, seeing us, will see something of the beauty of God. If they thus see it, they must see it in our attitude toward our fellow men. It must be because, throwing aside all compromises, in the power of God, we undertake to live the perfect Golden Rule in relation to our fellows. Then Christianity will become understandable to men.

A friend of mine who is pastor of a church in Brooklyn, New York, dropped in by invitation

one Monday to lunch with one of his men who was the secretary of a big corporation that has its office in Broadway, New York. My friend had preached the night before on the text, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," and when they sat down to lunch the next day, the business man said to him: "Say, what you said last night about helping folks is true. I have tried it in business. And I have had a lot of fun out of it, too. For instance," he went on, "there is our stenographer. She supports her mother and two or three younger brothers and sisters. Well, this past winter the girl was laid off for a long time by sickness. After several weeks the question of continuing her salary came up in our directors' meeting. One man said: 'O, we might as well drop her from the pay roll. She will never be able to work again.' Then I got up and said: 'Men, that won't do. Our concern will never miss the salary that goes to that sick girl and her family. So I move that her salary be continued indefinitely whether she comes back or not.' And my motion was carried. Well, the result is, the girl is back at work. More than that, with tears in her eyes, she told me the very moment she heard of the company's action she seemed to get better. O," he added, "there's a peck of fun in doing things like that.' "

My friend, the preacher, remarked, "That's Christianity walking around on two feet." The business man laughed a little and continued: "Only recently our man Tom got very sick. Tom works down in the basement, handles freight and the like. Having no education, he makes only small pay. Tom lives with his old mother and is her only means of support. Well, it looked as if Tom's last call had come. But after lingering on for a long time he began to improve. Now, of course, it was a little thing to do, but every afternoon I sent one of the men over to find out how Tom was getting on. Then every Saturday I had his pay envelope sent to his mother. Well, as luck would have it, Tom got well, too, and is back at work. And, say," said the business man with a twinkle in his big tender eyes, "I don't want to boast, but Tom thinks I am about right. Tom's gratitude has brought me more satisfaction than a month's salary. But," said the business man to his preacher, as they got to the ice cream, "the finest bit of joy I have had at this sort of thing was last Christmas. At our home, over in Brooklyn, we have a washerwoman who comes in once a week to make things easier for the downstairs maid. She was having a hard time round the holidays. Mike, her husband, was investing his own wages, and Bridget's, too, in the cup. My wife told me about it. 'Well,' thought I, 'I'll just

play a Christmas trick on Bridget.' So I bought the biggest, fattest turkey I could find, had it roasted and sent to her. And the fun of it all is she don't know to this day who sent it."

My friends, it is along this line that the Golden Rule must work itself out in the world's redemption. It is not a thing of Christmas only, it must be every day in the year that we shall be climbing, in fellowship with Jesus Christ, up into unselfishness and love in all our social and business life.

IV

I must not close without calling attention to the comforting and inspiring hope which our theme offers to the sinning soul. You may be as great a sinner as Peter was, as unstable, as unreliable, as easily led away to deny your Lord; but Jesus Christ looks into your heart and sees that if you will turn from your sin and follow him, "Thou shalt be" redeemed from your besetting sins and lifted into a new life of righteousness and peace.

It must be that I speak to some who are very much dissatisfied with what they are. You are conscious that you have come far short of your privileges. You had such a good father, you had such a beautiful mother, the atmosphere of your childhood was so tender with prayer and so fragrant with Christian faith, that you feel it to be

a shame that at your age you should be so prayerless and so far from the noble Christian that you ought to be. Brother, sister, Christ stands looking into your heart as he looked into that of Andrew's brother, and he is saying, " 'Thou art' more sinful even than you see, but if you will open the doors of your heart and let me come in and dwell there 'thou shalt be' a better man or a holier woman than you dream possible. Everything that is beautiful and noble in humanity shall be yours if you will but open your heart that I may come in and be master in your life."

CHAPTER V

THE MASTER'S VESSEL

He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.—*2 Tim. 2. 21.*

HENRY WESTON FROST, an English poet, recently went through a manufactory where potters were at work, and was fascinated with the marvelous way in which the potter at his wheel transformed the unattractive and useless clay into rare and beautiful shapes and forms, so that the clay which once was only good to be trodden under foot was sought after by the rich and powerful and admired by artistic and cultivated taste and welcomed to a place in the mansion or the palace. The poet was a Christian man, and as he looked at the potter and admired his marvelous skill, this wonderful figure which Paul uses in his letter to Timothy came to his mind; and as he went away home it clung to his thought, and he could not give it up, and so he wrote a poem entitled "The Transformed Clay," which had its inspiration in the potter's wheel and in the text which we are studying to-day:

I

A potter sat at his wheel one day,
In a cellar both dark and cold.
Around in piles lay the plastic clay
All damp, and covered with mold;
In shapeless heaps it lay on the sand.
Waiting the touch of the master's hand.

The potter's foot turned his wheel around
Till faster and faster it flew,
With a click and a creak, and a whirring sound,
That filled all the cellar through.
Then the potter laid hold on a mass of clay,
Where it lay in the darkness, dull and gray.

The potter's sight was both clear and keen,
And his touch was skillful and true;
And the clay which lay in his hands between,
He fashioned, and fashioned anew.
Till, there on the wheel, before his eyes,
A shapely vessel began to rise.

At last the whir of the wheel was still
And the work of the potter was done.
Then the vessel was placed on the outer sill,
In the light of the summer sun;
And there the dull clay of the cellar cold
Stood, a beautiful vase, all bathed with gold.

II

One day there was sound in the narrow street,
Of hoof and of chariot wheel.
And the King drew near, the potters to greet,
And to ask of his people's weal.
For none, as he, was so kind and true,
The length and breadth of the whole land through.

The greetings over, the King passed by,
Then he turned toward the palace hill.
But he suddenly stayed, for his watchful eye
Had seen the vase on the sill,
Where it stood in the sunlight, slender and fair,
Exquisitely fashioned, a work most rare.

The King called the potter and asked his price;
He paid what was asked, and e'en more;
Then he hid his treasure of rich device
In his bosom, and thus he bore
The vase to the palace—his coveted prize,
The joy of his heart and delight of his eyes.

And now if you seek for the cold, dull clay,
You must pass the old cellar by,
And go up the hill, by the King's highway,
'Neath the light of the sunlit sky,
Till you reach the palace, the King's fair home;
Yea, there you will find it—beside the Throne!

Our text is in the midst of a striking paragraph in which Paul is setting forth to Timothy the conditions on which one may live a useful life; the characteristics we must have in order that God may use us to the full measure. The entire paragraph reads: "The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness. Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for

the master's use, prepared unto every good work. But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Our text is the center, the core, of this paragraph. A man "shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work," on conditions which are specified here.

I

We have in our theme, first, the thought of cleansing. It is the vessel that is purged, that is clean, that is fit for divine use. That it be clean is of more importance than anything else. There are many things for which a vessel cannot be used at all, no matter what metal it is made of, unless it is clean. If we were to go in haste to give a draught of refreshing water to a traveler or a caller, we would take from our shelf the first vessel that was clean. We would pass over the elegant and richly chased cups for a common earthenware mug, or a plain tin cup, or even a country gourd, if it were clean and the others were filthy. And Christ will gladly use us for his service, though we be but common ware, if only we are clean and ready for use. You go into the hospitals and you will find that the instruments which are used in operations are constantly kept in carbolic acid, that they may not carry the slightest conta-

gion to an open wound; and we need to remember that we cannot touch the open and festering wounds which sin has caused, without injury to ourselves and others, unless we are ever in the cleansing atmosphere of the Spirit of Christ.

We need to put great emphasis on the necessity of taking into consideration what effect our books, and the things we read, as well as our companions and friendships, and the themes upon which we muse and meditate, will have upon the cleanliness of our souls. There can be no greater folly than for us, through corrupt associations, or impure literature, or a salacious play, or a cynical or evil-minded companion, to give our souls a bath in dirty water that will make us unfit for use in the Master's service. It is not necessary that a thing be outrageously bad or scandalously evil in order to take off the freshness and beauty of our reverence, our trustfulness, and our keen enjoyment of that which is pure and good. If we find that anything we do is leaving the soul less pure and less satisfied with genuine Christian things and Christian service, that should be enough to cause us to condemn it and to know that for us it is unsafe.

An Irishman was a laborer on a farm, and the farmer said to him one day, "That was a good sermon, was it not, that we heard last Sunday?"

The Irishman replied: "True for you, your

honor, an illigant one! It done me a power of good intirely. Indade it did."

"I am glad of that. Can you tell me what interested you most? What was it about?"

"O, well," scratching his head, "I don't rightly—not just exactly know. I—a—I—a—where's the use in telling? Sure I don't remember one single 'dividual word of it, good or bad. Sorra a bit of me knows."

"And yet you say that it did you a power of good?"

"So it did, sir. I'll stick to that, your honor."

"I don't see how."

"Well, now, your honor, look here. There is my shirt. After the wife's washing, clean and white it is, by reason of all the water and the soap and the starch that's gone through it. D' ye see? But not a drop of 'em all—water, or soap, or starch, or blueing—has stayed in, d'ye see? And that's just the same wid me and that sermon. It's run through me, your honor, and it's dried out of me; but all the same, just like me Sunday shirt, I am the cleaner and better after it."

There was sound philosophy in the Irishman's reasoning, and you may be sure that impressions for good or evil may be indelibly stamped upon the mind and bear fruit long after the cause which produced them has passed away, or is forgotten.

Let us search our hearts most earnestly to see

if there be any wicked way in us, or if there be any sin clinging to us that makes us unfit for the Master's use; and if there be in us a consciousness that God cannot use us because of our fault, let us pray God that we may be purged and cleansed so that we shall be fit for his use.

II

We must be careful of our confidence and hold fast to our trust in God if we are to be fit for the Master's service. Just prior to this paragraph, Paul advises Timothy to be careful about his associations, that he does not associate with skeptical and cynical people, such as Hymenæus and Philetus, whose word, to use the graphic phrase of Paul, "will eat as doth a gangrene." And how true that is! Who of us have not seen a man ruined as a helpful, useful, Christian worker through the association with some one whose light babbling or cold-blooded cynicism has taken the keen edge off his faith in God, the sweetness out of his prayer, and the restfulness out of his reliance upon the Bible? O, the deadly gangrene that may be started in a man's heart through such associations! If we are to be vessels of honor, whom Christ can use in every good work, we must keep our minds and hearts reverent in the Bible atmosphere; fragrant with the praise of Christian hymns, tender and sympathetic

through secret prayer and Christian service. Such a constant atmosphere will keep the soul not only clean, but confident and courageous, so that it will fear nothing but God; and your fear of him will be born of love for him.

In the year 1745 Cornwall was like a pandemonium in bitter opposition to the evangelistic preaching of John Wesley. In the town of Falmouth a howling mob filled the streets, trying to find Wesley, determined to kill him. He, in a house in the town, was deserted by all his friends except a young girl—a servant girl, I imagine—whom he calls “poor Kitty,” and they heard the mob in the street; and they heard them, with fierce yells, break into the house and into the adjoining room. There was only a thin partition of wood between the mob and the room in which Wesley and the girl were, and they were battering at that partition. Wesley quietly took down from the partition a mirror, lest it should be broken, and then the poor, trembling girl said, “O sir, what must we do?” Wesley said, “We must pray.” Their lives did not seem to be worth an hour’s purchase. “Is it not better to hide?” said the poor girl. “Would it not be better for you to get here into the closet?” “No,” said Wesley, “it is best for me to stand just where I am.” Now, you will remember that John Wesley, although he was one of the greatest heroes that ever lived,

in his spirit, was a very little man physically, one of the shortest and feeblest of men, and he counted it better, after praying, to stand just where he was. The mob was soon joined by a number of sailors who came up from the harbor, and were ready to join in the chase, and mad with the rest of the mob for making so long a business of it. Wesley heard them rush into the neighboring room, and with a cry, "Avast, lads, avast," thrust themselves against the whole partition and the whole partition wall fell down, and the howling mob was in the room before him. Then John Wesley said, quietly, to them: "Here I am. Which of you has anything to say against me?" And so appalled were they by the quiet courage of the little man, that without knowing what they did, they made way, and Wesley quietly walked through them all into the street, and there in the street, with the mob howling around him, he began quietly to preach, and as he preached, the crowd was anxious to hear; and presently the very leaders of the mob—the captains of it, as he called them—gathered around him and shouted out, "Not a man shall touch him; let him speak." And there he delivered his message, and quietly passed through them to the harbor, where he took his boat, and that night he wrote in his journal: "I never saw before the hand of God so plainly shown as here."

What was the secret of it all? John Wesley believed God, pillowed his head upon his promises, feared him; but he feared nothing else in the world. God can always use a man who keeps his faith and confidence fresh and reverent and loving through constant communion with the Bible and prayer and holy living.)

III

If we are to have the kind of personality that Christ can always use in every good work, we must keep our souls musical with things beautiful and good. There must be no strife nor discord in our natures. Selfishness, with its envy and hate and anger and evil temper, must be banished, and, as Paul tells Timothy, we must "follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." How often we see, in the common life of every day, a man or a woman, or a boy or a girl, taken up and used successfully in some important place not because they have greater gifts than others who are rejected, but because there is about them a certain rhythm, a certain harmony of soul, that makes it possible for them to be used without discord, where one with greater gifts and much larger ability is impossible because lacking in that harmonious nature. So Christ can use us only when there is in our souls the longing to

make music for him, longing to give our service, not from any selfish purpose, but because of our great love for him. A loving service is the only service Christ can use. He can supplement our power, he can supplement our lack of ability, if we are only clean and trustful and loving, ready to do our best. Christ is able to supplement all other lacks and make us useful beyond our fondest dreams.

Dr. F. B. Meyer tells the story of a party of tourists who were making holiday in Norway. They were staying at a beautiful hotel in a most picturesque region, where there stretched on every side magnificent views of mountains and land-locked seas. But the drawing-room of that hotel became to many people almost unbearable. Every morning a little girl, who had just begun to learn the difficult science of music, seated herself at the grand piano and commenced to strum the five-finger exercises and those simple little melodies with which every novice must begin; and all day long, with but little respite, the enthusiastic little soul went through the oft-repeated part with the same mistakes recurring with dreadful monotony until that drawing-room became a desert in which she played alone. But one day the strumming ceased and the house was flooded with divinest music. The visitors flocked from tennis court and garden, from private sitting room and bed-

room, from every nook and corner where they had sought a refuge from that ardent child, and as they trooped into the drawing-room, a strange scene met their sight. One of the leading pianists of Europe was seated by the little maiden's side, and as she strummed with her two fingers, with delicate touch and infinite expression, the great musician lifted her childish theme into his own magnificent improvisation, turning her discords into gracious harmonies, until the whole household stood entranced. When the impromptu concert ceased and the uninvited audience began to express their thanks, with the humility of true dignity the pianist made reply, "It is this little lady whom you must thank for any pleasure you have derived."

And, my dear friends, that is what the Lord Jesus Christ is able to do, and willing to do, and longing to do with every one of us. If we will only try to play our part, though it is but a little part, earnestly and lovingly, we shall not be without his skill and his infinite help. Without him we stumble and fail to strike the true note of rapture, and though we do our best, there will often be unhappy discords. But if we, through our complete surrender to do his will, yield ourselves wholly and lovingly to his service, he will come and take his place by our side, and with his skillful touch on the keys of life, our frailties will be

caught up and blended with his strong chords of rich and tender music, and life will be made one grand, sweet song.

IV

One thing more I think our theme should teach us. If Christ is to use us to the best advantage, then he must have all there is of us. We must give ourselves entirely to his service.

Bishop Hendrix, in his "Literature of the Saints," says that revealed religion shows the delight which God has in a man who gives the whole of himself that he may know and do the will of God. Only when we give our all to God can we know him, and can he make use of us. Whatever of selfish motives control us, by so much are the intellectual faculties dulled and the spiritual perceptions dimmed. We increase our power and enlarge our influence only as we forget ourselves. Horace used to say that no avaricious man could be a poet, and Milton declared that "He who would write a great poem must make his life a great poem." God makes the largest use of those whose powers are wholly his in fellowship and service. It is the man who is fit to receive God's message who becomes at once God's messenger. The prophet was Israel at its highest, a peculiar, a holy people, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. His per-

sonal exaltation in rapt communion with God was more than the content of his message. There were deep religious experiences that no language could tell, and it was unlawful to attempt it. The inspired man was more than the inspired message. God spake through him only so far as God spake in him. It is the holy lips of Isaiah, cleansed by fire, and surrendered entirely to God's service, which have won a hearing for his inspired, because holy, words. Heaven seems possible—indeed, seems certain—when once you have looked on the face of Jesus Christ and listened to the prophets and the apostles and come to feel and know the divine Presence in your own heart. Heaven becomes a necessity because of the heavenly atmosphere of the soul.

A few months before he went away to heaven Phillips Brooks, one of God's noblest prophets, coming home from Europe, had a glimpse of the city of God that is builded of true and noble souls, and wrote a little poem entitled "The Waiting City." How his own soul must have exulted as, looking out across the waste of waters, he saw the city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," and, seeing, sang:

A city throned upon the height behold,
Wherein no foot of man as yet has trod;
The city of man's life fulfilled in God.
Bathed all in light, with open gates of gold.

Perfect the city is in tower and street;
And there a palace for each mortal waits,
Complete and perfect, at whose outer gates
An angel stands its occupant to greet.

Still shine, O patient city on the height,
The while our race in hut and hovel dwells.
It hears the music of thy heavenly bells
And its dull soul is haunted by thy light.
Lo, once the Son of man hath heard thy call
And the dear Christ hath claimed thee for us all.

CHAPTER VI

THE STRENGTH WON FROM THE DESERT

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;
In whose heart are the highways to Zion.
Passing through the valley of Weeping they make it
a place of springs;
Yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings.
They go from strength to strength;
Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.—
Psa. 84. 5-7 (Am. Rev. Ver.).

THE desert places of the earth have fascinated the people of our age more than those of any other epoch in history. Not only the ice-barrens of the Arctic Circle, or the still more bleak and desolate wastes of the frozen South, but the great desert spaces of all continents have their explorers, that vie with each other in courage and daring and death if they may search out the mystery and the silence of the desert. We have many books, these days, like "The Return of the Native," and "The Garden of Allah," the chief fascination of which is that they tell us of the strange joys and powers and presences and colors in those silent regions that not long ago were counted to be only bleak and desolate waste places. With eloquence and with vivid portraiture these authors show the picturesqueness of the desert, especially the great

deserts of the East, and the majesty that lies in the great flat places stretching out as eternity stretches from the edge of time, full of mystery, of power, and of all deep and significant things.

There is a spiritual significance in all this.

In one of these modern books of the desert there is given a bit of dialogue between a man and a woman:

“‘The desert is full of truth. Is that what you mean to ask?’ the man says.

“‘The woman made no reply.

“‘The man stretched out his hand to the shining expanse of desert before them.

“‘The man who is afraid of prayer is unwise to set foot beyond the palm trees,’ he said.

“‘Why unwise?’ she asks.

“‘He answers, ‘The Arabs have a saying, “The desert is a garden of Allah.” ’ ’ ”

I

Here, then, is our theme. The desert is the garden of God. That which David calls the “Valley of Weeping” has its legitimate place in the geography of every human career. The desert has its counterpart in the life of the soul of man. None of us can hope to escape it. There come to everyone who lives long on the earth those silent and desert places which Newman in his great hymn calls the “moor and fen,” across which

he trusts God will guide him, as well as over the "crag and torrent." The desert is likely to appear at any time in our lives, and change and transform them into something very different from that which our ambition plans. Indeed, our ambition may unwittingly lead straight to the desert. You remember the ambition of the mother who came to Christ with her two sons, who say unto him, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory." How little did they dream that if their prayer had been answered, on that black Friday on Golgotha, which we have come to call "Good Friday," they would have taken the place of those two thieves who were crucified, the one on his right hand and the other on his left. Some one sings of this:

I dreamed of an heritage of ease;
And my poor heart was fain
That bliss to know, that prize to seize,
That golden crown to gain.

I set me to win it, and eagerly
I planned and toiled and strove;
And I asked the Lord to grant it me
Of his exceeding love.

Was he cruel to say me nay? Behold,
He said it in love for me.
For what I took for a throne of gold
Was a cross of misery.

II

The desert is a great brooding place of souls. Souls that would shrivel and become narrow and dwarfed with abundant fertility and prosperity are oftentimes enlarged and enriched by the brooding and meditation that comes in the desert places of trial and weakness and uncertainty. Many of us have known what Dr. Robertson Nicoll describes when he says that in the busiest and most crowded life men may come to a day where the desert suddenly rolls up to their door. The soul is at once by great bereavement put upon a life-and-death battle with vacancy and dreariness, when the last echo of human joy seems to faint upon the air, when the sounds of the world are a harsh intrusion upon desolation, when life seems hardly any longer valid, and there is nothing for it but to say, "No one but God knows what is in my heart." Verily the "moor and fen" have come to us; it is the wilderness from which we may never emerge. It is the experience from which many never recover to take true hold of life any more; it is the veritable grayness of the desert that has passed into the soul. And yet, if we are wise enough and humble enough to bow down before God and open the mind and heart to him in the desert places, the desert may be the great brooding place of our lives and infinitely enrich us and enlarge our possibilities.

Many of you will remember from your childhood the story of "Sindbad, the Sailor." When Sindbad went to Serendib he found that nothing could exceed the riches and the grandeur of the king. Nothing could excite greater admiration than the magnificence of his palace. When this prince wished to appear in public a throne was prepared for him on the back of an elephant; on this he sat and proceeded between two files composed of his ministers, favorites, and others belonging to the court. Before him, on the same elephant, sat an officer with a golden lance in his hand, and behind the throne another stood with a pillar of gold on the top of which was placed an emerald about six inches long and an inch thick. He was preceded by a guard of a thousand men, habited in silk and gold stuffs, and all mounted on elephants which were richly caparisoned.

When the king was on his march, the officer who sat before him on the elephant from time to time cried with a loud voice, "This is the great monarch, the powerful and magnanimous Sultan of the Indies, whose palace is covered with a hundred thousand rubies, and who possesses twenty thousand diamond crowns."

After pronouncing these words the officer who stood behind the throne cried in his turn, "This monarch, who is so great and powerful, must die,"

must die, must die." The first officer then replied, "Hail to him who lives and dies not."

The purpose of this constant refrain was to save the monarch from reckless pride. And it is the deserts of life, with their constant calls to humility, with their constant refrain speaking to us of our weakness, of our frailty, of our lack of permanency and power, that are to wise and earnest souls a new garden of God in which the soul may sprout anew those eternal growths which alone make for true greatness in our lives.

If I speak to any at this time who are in the midst of the desert, and who have been tempted to give up the struggle of life because of the depressing influence of these hard experiences which have surrounded you, I wish to be God's messenger to you this morning, to awaken you to realize the fact that this very desert which seems to you to be the graveyard of all of your hopes, and the burial ground of all the fond longings of your soul, may be, if you will, the very garden of God to you. It may be to you what the prison was to John Bunyan and what the wilderness and mountain cave were to David. It may be the place where you shall rise out of weakness into strength, and achieve blessings not only for yourself but cause springs of joy and of life to flow forth to others. Some poet writes with graphic clearness in illustration of this great truth:

Tired! well, what of that?
Didst fancy life was spent on beds of ease,
Fluttering the rose leaves scatter'd by the breeze?
Come! rouse thee, work while it is called to-day!
Coward, arise—go forth upon the way!

Lonely! And what of that?
Some must be lonely; 'tis not given to all
To feel a heart responsive rise and fall—
To blend another life into its own;
Work may be done in loneliness; work on!

Dark! Well, and what of that?
Didst fondly dream the sun would never set?
Dost fear to lose thy way? Take courage yet;
Learn thou to walk by faith and not by sight;
Thy steps will guided be, and guided right.

Hard! Well, and what of that?
Didst fancy life one summer holiday
With lessons none to learn and naught but play?
Go, get thee to thy task; conquer or die!
It must be learned—learn it then patiently.

No help! Nay; 'tis not so,
Though human help be far, thy God is nigh,
Who feeds the ravens, hears his children cry.
He's near thee wheresoe'er thy footsteps roam,
And he will guide thee, light thee, help thee home.

III

In the desert we may come, if we will, into closer fellowship with God and with Christ than we can know anywhere else. Christ is not a stranger to the desert. When he went forth from his baptism to his great ministry, he first spent forty days in the wilderness with the wild beasts,

and it was in the desert places of trial and temptation that he found his preparation for that wonderful ministry in which he so marvelously revealed the heart of God to men. Let no one who suffers in desert experiences doubt for a moment that Christ follows close and is ready at the slightest desire on your part to enter into most loving and comforting fellowship.

A minister who devotes much time to work among the very poor tells how one night in a great city he walked through the storm, and as he walked rapidly he came up behind a poor woman who was very thinly clad and by her side was a little girl. Suddenly the woman stopped, shuffled round her shoulders toward the child a thin and tattered black shawl, and wrapped it round the little girl. As she did so she said, "Come closer to me, Nellie." The good man watched all this, and followed as they went on. He heard the mother say, "Does the rain come on you now, Nellie?"

"No, mother," said the little voice.

"Well, come closer to me, Nellie."

Soon they entered a railway bridge where they were for a moment free from the storm. As they did so the minister stepped up into the light and said, "You seem in trouble?"

The woman turned, startled and afraid, but on looking into his face, recognized him, and

said, with a sigh of relief, "O, is that you, Mr. ——?"

"Yes. What is the matter?"

"O, my poor husband has been ill for a month, and we have nothing left. We have neither fire nor food, and I have just been to the pawnshop to see if I could get anything on this"—and she produced a small parcel—"but the door is shut. I am broken-hearted."

The minister went home with them, and there was soon fire in the grate, and food on the table, and tears of gratitude, and gleams of returning hope. But as he went home that night the minister said the words ringing in his ears and reëchoing down deep in his heart were: "Come closer to me, Nellie. Does the rain come on you now, Nellie?" "No, mother." "Well, come closer to me, Nellie." And as he said these words over and over he heard another Voice saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." O travelers in the desert, you may find Jesus there, and, finding him, know that the desert shall become the rose garden of God unto your souls. You may go from strength to strength even in your "Valley of Weeping."

Dr. Watkinson said recently that many a young

man or young woman was saying, "I cannot serve God in this situation." People say: "It is impossible to keep religion in a shop like ours. There is an entire absence of religion in the place. You might as well expect to keep your health amid fever swamps as to live a hightoned life in an establishment like ours." But if in that Sahara-like desert where you work you will enter into fellowship with Christ, and day by day walk with his yoke about your neck, God will strengthen you as he is strengthening thousands of young men and young women to live brave, pure lives in most forbidding circumstances; and they bring the luster, the bloom, the fragrance of the skies into the desert places where they are. Be of good courage. God shall bless you there. You shall tread on the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon you shall trample under foot. And if we thus enter into fellowship with God in our desert experiences, we shall come out of the desert and the wilderness not weakened and defeated, but, like Christ, who came away from his desert of trial and temptation in the power of the Spirit and ministered to by angels, we shall get from the hard, trying experiences of life greater power and nobler joy than we have ever known.

God always has an "afterward"

For every bitter thing.

The flowers may fall, but fruit abides;

The butterfly's bright wing.

Is painted in its long night's sleep;
Each winter hath its spring.
How glorious is the afterward
When Easter joy-bells ring!

God always has an "afterward":
The patriarch Job, of old,
When in the fires was yet assured
He should come forth as gold;
And Joseph found it thus, when he
Was by his brethren sold—
A wealth of blessing God designed,
Unfathomed and untold.

God always has an "afterward"—
An afterward of bliss;
First night, then morning, formed the day,
So must it end like this!
His purpose, higher than our thought,
We should be sad to miss;
Though hidden, folded in his hand,
Faith still that hand would kiss.

God has a shining "afterward"
For every cloud of rain;
We may not see the meaning now
Of sorrow and of pain,
But nothing God permits his child
Can ever be in vain;
The seed here watered by our tears,
Yields sheaves of ripened grain.

God always has an "afterward";
He keeps the best in store,
And we shall see it hath been so
When we reach yonder shore:
The cross, the shame, he once despised,
For the joy set before,
And as we follow we shall find
Death is Life's opening door!

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW SONG

Sing unto the Lord a new song.—*Psa. 96. 1.*

A SONG to a man like David was the one fit expression of thanksgiving for and appreciation of the mercies of God. This expression which we have taken for our text is often used in the Psalms, because David never believed in making one song serve for two victories. Every great achievement, every great conquest, every escape from an enemy, meant a new song of thanks to the God in whose help he had trusted. David was always facing the future, and it is in that way that the new songs will come to us.

Dr. Len G. Broughton, of Atlanta, Georgia, tells how in his youth he went up from his home in the South to New York. It was the first time he had ever been in a great city. A friend of his took him one day to show him the sights, and, among other things, he took him to a "Museum of Living Curiosities." In that museum the first thing that caught his eye was a man with his head on backward. He looked as straight back of him as an ordinary man looks front.

Broughton said to his friend, "Is that a sure-enough man, or is it one of those made-up men?"

"Suppose you examine him," was the reply.

He said it was a most curious thing to walk up to the front of a man, looking at the back of his head. When he got up to him, the strange man turned his back on him and smiled.

"Are you a sure-enough man?" Broughton asked.

"Why do you ask that question?" said he.

"Well, if you are," said Broughton, "I am sorry for you, because you never see anything until it has gone past you."

Many people are like that; their heads are turned toward the past, and for such there are no new songs. Emerson said concerning the age in which he lived that it was just like that man—always looking backward; and, with some qualifications, our own age is much like it. It is retrospective. It builds the sepulchers of the fathers. It writes biographies, historic criticisms. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, largely, through their eyes. Why should we not also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should we not have a poetry and philosophy of insight instead of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us and not the history of theirs? With the floods of life streaming around and through us, and inviting us to action, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation

of the day into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines for us to-day as for them. There are more resources now than in the past. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Why shall we not have a living world, sensitive to the presence of the living God, and sing our own new songs to the God who is our God as much as he was David's?

I

We should have suggested to us by our theme that the new song can be awakened only out of a living, vital experience. A song is life at concert pitch. A song is the essence of living, it is life extracted. When life is at its full, then both birds and men sing. Sick people, worn out people, discouraged people, dead people, do not sing. A song is life bursting into music. You cannot have a new song unless you live a new life. A song is a vital thing that springs out of a pulsing, sensitive, virile experience. A great literary critic wrote a while ago that he never understood the drive and leap and spring of Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion" until he declaimed it aloud on a galloping horse. But why did the secret of "Marmion" come out when it was declaimed on the back of a galloping horse? Because it was composed on the back of a galloping horse. And if you will take up "Marmion" with

this conception of the leap and spring and gallop in your mind and heart, you will get the very go and drive and rhythm of the poem. And if we are to have new songs to sing to God, we must be living our own lives, genuinely, earnestly, every day.

I wish I knew how to make you feel, as I feel, that all these old hymns, those of redemption, for instance, are largely dead driftwood, and only formal pawns in our church service, unless there is something of the living, sacrificial, blood-letting fact of redemption being experienced in our own lives. He who knows by experience what it is to give himself for another, gets a new song of redemption that to him is as new as was the song of Miriam on the bank of the Red Sea, or the song of Moses and the Lamb to those who stand on the sea of glass.

Let me tell you a simple little New England story about two farm boys. Their names were Tom and Joe. Tom was the younger. It was his place to bring in the cows for the milking every evening, and he had always been told, when he brought in the cows for the milking, to put up the bars, lest the younger cattle should get out and do damage. But he did not always like to do it. It was a lot of work. And one day the bars were left down, and the younger cattle came out of the field and did a lot of damage.

Now, the father had said very plainly that the next time the thing happened he would give Tom a whipping, and things were very gloomy about the house that evening, and the next morning at breakfast. After breakfast the father went down into the lower field to do some work, and the older boy, Joe, went down to find him. He said: "Father, do you remember in the reading this morning at family prayers it said, 'He was wounded for our transgressions'?"

"Yes."

Joe continued: "Father, I don't want Tom whipped."

And the father knitted his brows and said: "My boy, I must have discipline. Tom has done wrong, and I must keep my word and whip him."

Then the boy said again: "Father, didn't you read, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; with his stripes we are healed'?"

"Why, yes, boy. What a memory you have!"

"Well," he said, "father, I want to take Tom's whipping."

And the father said, "No, my boy." Then he stopped, and looked shrewdly out of the corner of his eye, and said: "Did Tom send you to me?"

"No," Joe said.

The father thought for a few moments, and then remarked: "Go and bring Tom down."

The elder boy found his brother up at the house, trying to study his lessons, with no very good success. He said: "Tom, father wants to see you in the field."

"Well," returned Tom, "I guess I may as well have it out now as any other time."

Joe said to him, "Just be good now, and answer father nicely, and don't show temper."

Tom looked as if he thought it was very nice for Joe to talk that way. He did not have a whipping in store. They went down to the lower field, and found the father standing, leaning on the handle of his hayfork, absorbed in thought.

By and by Joe said, "Father, here is Tom."

The father looked up and said: "Tom, do you remember in the reading this morning it said, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; with his stripes we are healed'?"

"Yes," said Tom, in astonishment.

"What does it mean?" inquired the father.

Tom rather flushed up as he replied, "I suppose it means that Christ suffered for us."

"Well, Tom," the father said, "Joe offers to take your whipping."

Tom swung around to Joe, threw his arms around his neck and cried: "No, Joe, I was wrong. I deserve the whipping. You must not." Then he turned to his father with a brave but a gentle,

tender face, all the sullenness gone out of it, and said, "Father, I am ready now."

The father's eyes were glistening and, in a shaking voice, he answered: "Well, my boy, I think there will be nobody whipped just now. But remember this: if the bars are left down again, Joe's offer holds good. You may go now."

But the bars were never left down again. And both boys went away singing a new song in their hearts. For the one on one side and the other on the other had lived that morning, really lived, the story of redemption.

II

I think our theme should teach us that it is life, effort, rather than achievement, that gives the new song. David's greatest songs came when he was struggling without victories. God gives the new songs to the men who live; the men who fight their sins, the men who struggle for the best; the men who toil upward and climb, even though they never reach the mountaintop. It is life makes the song, not achievement.

They have in Holland a picture which they called "The Jewel of The Hague." It is the picture of the farmland. There, under a tree, are lying a cow, a ram, a mother sheep, and a lamb. But above them all stands the splendid proportions of the male offspring of that cow. Strong,

powerfully formed, is he. From the looks of the animal, he must be about two years old. Instead of the mother protecting him, he stands as the protector of the mother. It is one of the great pictures, and artists from all over the world sit before it in admiration. Yet Paul Potter, the unknown sign-painter, painted "The Jewel of The Hague" for a tavern sign. For years it swayed backward and forward, beckoning the traveler to come and find refreshment within.

I know another story like that in a different type. The blind poet, Marston, once had a tragic experience. He sat down at his typewriter one day, in a frenzy of inspiration. As he wrote, he gloried to find that he was at the very top of his creative bent. He wrote on and on, fervidly, for hours. At last he finished, and was sitting spent with the long-sustained effort, but still in the glow of achievement, when a friend came in. Marston told him that he had just finished the finest thing he had ever done, his masterpiece, and asked the friend to gather up the sheets and read, and tell what he thought of it. The friend picked up sheet after sheet until he held them all in his hand, and at last he had to tell the poet that he saw no poem, nothing but blank sheets. The ribbon had been removed from Marston's typewriter, and he had absolutely nothing to show for his inspiration and his toil.

I think both of these stories are illustrative. There are many Paul Potters. There are many men and women who have had beautiful and inspiring earthly dreams; but they have never been able to make those dreams materialize. There are many workers for good who have struggled honestly and with great enthusiasm, whose work has been much like Marston's on the typewriter without a ribbon. But neither Paul Potter's painting nor Marston's poem-writing failed of the highest purpose, as they wrought on their dreams, and painted and sang their visions. God gave them their new song, the noblest song of all, the song of expression, the song that comes from uttering oneself, the song of doing one's best—the noblest song man can give back to God.

We make a mistake when we imagine that there are only songs for the victory that comes with gladness. The sweetest songs men ever sing come through sorrow. David's most glorious songs were born in the wilderness and in the cave, and I am sure there are among us those who can realize the truth of the poet when he sings:

I came to the Valley of Sorrow,
And dreary it looked to my view,
But Jesus was walking beside me,
And sweetly we journeyed it through.
And now I looked back to that valley
As the fairest that ever I trod,
For I learned there the love of my Father,
I leaned on the arm of my God.

Yes, as I look back to the valley
 From the crest of its glory-crowned hill;
 I call it my Valley of Blessing,
 So peaceful it lieth—so still;
 And sweeter its calm to my spirit,
 Than the chorus of jubilant song;
 'Tis there that the mourners find comfort,
 'Tis there that the weak are made strong.

O, fair is the Valley of Sorrow!
 God's tenderest angels are there;
 Its shadows are lighted by Patience,
 And sweet with the fragrance of Prayer;
 Tired hearts gather strength in the valley,
 And burdens once heavy grow light;
 Ah, sweet are the "songs of the sunshine,"
 But sweeter the "songs in the night."

O beautiful Valley of Sorrow!
 So holy, so calm, and so blest!
 Thy ways are the fairest I travel
 This side of the Land of my Rest.
 And if some day the Father should ask me
 Which was best of the paths that I trod,
 How quickly my heart shall make answer:
 "The Valley of Sorrow, O God!"

III

The new song is born of hope and courage. I am satisfied that hope and courage are the sources out of which springs the vitality that triumphs over every difficulty and is always bursting into song. Some one says that the greatest thing of all to be coveted in a home is vitality. One vital being will quicken, quiet, and tame domesticity into tuneful enjoyment. There is no vitality

equal to the vitality of a child, the limbs always moving, the mind always quick, the spirits always high, the observation always keen. When the ringing laughter of a child falls upon a silent house, what a resurrection there is there! Women, though weaker physically than men, have, I think, been granted, perhaps in order to balance, more vitality. Dr. Nicholl tells how, in a Swiss hotel, he once saw a young girl who, by the sheer force of her intense and kind life, radiated the whole place. She was fresh, young, vital, full of red blood, abounding in hope and courage, and, somehow, she soon came to draw everyone within her orbit. When she left the place the whole company turned out to bid her good-by, and though she had brought them all into relations with one another, the place, it was universally confessed, was no longer the same.

These vital people pass through the severest trials, and they feel them, but they are not conquered by them. Sidney Smith was one of the most vital creatures who ever lived. When the years were heavy upon him, he wrote, "With the exception of three mortal diseases, I am quite well." Madame de Staël gave dinners on her deathbed. There are shocks and passions

That kill the bloom before its time,
And blanch without the owner's crime
The most resplendent hair.

Even if these things come, even if all their bitterness is tasted, the truly courageous and hopeful soul refuses to be subdued, will not live in the past, will not allow misfortune to conquer him, will not consent to be a mere wreck, but will continue to take his part in life. The man or the woman who thus lives with face to the front, courageous in the friendship with Jesus Christ, hopeful because of reliance upon God, may have an abounding good cheer that will give new songs under the darkest skies.

This abounding vitality which bursts into song is always possible to Christians, because our new song is not born of selfishness, but of the privilege of self-forgetfulness in bringing blessing to another. I came across a most beautiful story the other day, illustrating this. A gentleman was walking through one of the London parks when he saw a father walking with his little girl, who was about five years of age. They went by the statue to Mr. Fawcett, the blind postmaster-general, who used to live in that park. Standing behind the statue is an angel, and in the angel's hands a laurel crown, just coming down on the head of Mr. Fawcett. The father and the little girl looked at it and the child said, "What is the angel doing, daddy, with that ring with a big hole in the middle?"

"It is a crown being put on his head, dear."

"What are they putting a crown on his head for, daddy?"

"O, because he was a very good man."

"Will they put a crown on your head, daddy?"

"No, no, I don't suppose they will ever do that."

"Why not, daddy?"

"Well, they only put crowns on very good people's heads."

"What's the matter with you?" cried the child. "You're good enough!" And then, with a sudden inspiration: "Never mind, daddy; I'll be your angel and put a crown on your head."

Ah, if we were all as wise as that little child and ready to crown the good that we find in those about us, we would be the world's angels, and the divine love in which our lives would be lived would awaken the new songs, for it is love that wakes the light and the music of life. Somebody sings:

The night hath a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the whole world dies
With the setting sun.

The mind hath a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

I cannot close without a word of hope and appeal to the man or the woman who is conscious

this morning that your own sins have smothered the songs out of your heart and life. In the very nature of things, nothing will kill the song so quickly as sin. Sin not only degrades us, it crushes our hope and courage for our own souls. The divine power of Christianity lies in this, that Christ not only has power to forgive sins, but he is able to give the soul that is forgiven such a sensitive consciousness of God's love that it springs up again into new hope and courage. Thus it is that a man's conversion becomes the source of a new impulse, and no man can tell what glorious things are possible to him until he has turned away from every sin and surrendered his nature to the quickening power of the Divine Saviour.

There is living in this city to-day a man who, on the day when General Custer and his army of faithful soldiers went to their death, was the only man who escaped out of that valley of destruction. He was an orderly sergeant, and was sent by his commander to hurry up reënforcements. His horse was shot under him, and he escaped death only by seeming miracle, and through terrible hardships and sufferings. He did not reach the reënforcements in time, though it was his testimony alone that saved the brave officer from unjust condemnation. Well, that man drifted about afterward, and some five years ago was in this city, stranded. His wife and child were in

a distant State. He was without employment, without money, and had lost his self-control and his manly self-respect. He had become a poor, miserable drunkard. One night a man picked him up on the street, and, noting his despairing look, asked if he had a place to sleep for the night. He confessed he had not even the price of a lodging. This new friend took him to the "Helping Hand," and the minister who preached that night talked with him and arranged for him to stay. After he had gone to bed a sudden conviction came over him that he ought to thank God for this new offer of friendship and this new chance to be a man. He got right up out of bed, knelt down beside his cot, and gave himself to God. That was five years ago. It was only a little while before his wife and child came on; the drinking was gone, sin of every kind was cast aside, a new song was in his heart and on his lips, and to-day he is respected and honored by a multitude of people; and, best of all, he is a useful man, whose life blesses everybody he touches. His whole life is a new song unto God.

Perhaps there is some one who hears me now, who needs, above everything else, this new impulse, this new consecration to God through Jesus Christ, that will awaken the new song in your heart and life.

CHAPTER VIII

LIVING BY THE HIGHER VISION

We walk by faith, not by sight.—2 *Cor.* 5. 7.

IT is not humanity alone which walks by the higher vision, for even the dumb creatures of the woods do not walk merely by sense and sight. The greatest scientists admit that the humblest insects and birds have strange powers which range far beyond their knowledge. They cannot tell who points the way to a homing pigeon. They cannot explain why the robin knows enough to go South in winter, and back again to the North in the springtime. They cannot tell what marshals the swallows for a trackless flight to winter in tropical sunshine. They call these wonderful faculties "instincts," but the word is only a mask for our ignorance, for science has never fathomed instinct. And we may be sure that the God who taught the wild goose the path through thousands of miles of sky to its Northern nesting place has not forgotten his human children. He calls us to a higher path than that which is revealed by sense and sight. William Cullen Bryant, in perhaps the greatest of his

poems, illustrates this thought. Addressing his poem "To a Waterfowl," he sings:

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near,

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.

It is one of the great mysteries that man, who has learned to observe and to reason, who can guide his steps by what is surer than the instincts of birds and beasts, yet makes his own grandest advance when he reaches out beyond all that his previous knowledge has been able to verify and walks by the higher vision of faith instead of the lower vision of sight. Browning speaks of "greeting the unseen with a cheer." And in that sentence

the poet is not speaking about death and the future life; he is speaking of the whole world invisible around us now, the realm from which our courage and inspiration and power may come, the region that faith claims as its own. The man of faith always greets the unseen with a cheer, because to him the unseen is the secret of his bravest hopes and sturdiest strength. Faith means venture and risk, as in the case of Abraham, who left his own country not knowing whither he went. The nobleman whose child was sick went back home, after Jesus had said his child should live, without proof. Columbus, when he turned his ship's prow toward the sunset and crossed an unknown ocean, did not steer by sight or by experience. He had collected every scrap of evidence and had concentrated his mind for years on the secret of those Atlantic waters. But his voyage was a splendid act of faith. He made an heroic venture, and his venture revealed the New World. Faith may have its foundation in experience and knowledge, but it launches out beyond them and adventures upon the assurance of something which is as yet unknown by experience.

I

There could be no greater blunder than to think of faith and the spiritual realities which are associated with it as a mere matter of adornment

to life, an annex, or luxury, fringing the realities of existence. What bread is to the body faith is to the character and to the soul. Things that are worth while in human life can no more live without faith in God and in the possibilities of goodness than the human body can be sustained without wholesome food. During the panic three years ago, the Wall Street Journal, of New York city, printed a very remarkable editorial which was reprinted and discussed in every part of the world. The substance of that editorial was that the man who believes in a future life, who has faith in the eternal verities, is a citizen of two worlds. He moves in this, but his highest thought and inspiration are fixed on the future. To such a man, what takes place here and now is not unimportant, but it is infinitely less important than what shall take place hereafter. He looks upon his life here as but a preparation for the life to come. He measures everything by the infinite. Wealth, luxury, power, distinction—he may not despise these, but he looks upon them as being but temporary, mere delights which are given as tests of his character. Faith in eternal life smoothes out every inequality and injustice of the present life under the great weight of the infinite. It makes the poor feel rich and gives to the unfortunate a sense of grave responsibility and trusteeship.

The writer of this remarkable article in a financial journal assures his readers that he has no concern in mere theological discussions. He takes no part for or against any creed, but is intensely interested in the economic and political effects of any change in the thoughts, the habits, and the lives of men. If there has been a marked decline in religious faith, he declares that that fact cannot help being a factor in the markets. It changes the standards and affects the value of things which are bought and sold. It concerns the immediate interest of those who never had such a faith almost as much as it does the lives of those who have had the faith and lost it. The question, therefore, is of practical, immediate, and tremendous importance to Wall Street quite as much as to any other part of the world. He further asks: "Has there been a decline in the faith in the future life? and, if so, to what extent is this responsible for the special phenomena of our time—the eager pursuit of sudden wealth, the shameless luxury and display, the gross and corrupting extravagance, the misuse of swollen fortunes, the indifference to law, the growth of graft, the abuses of great corporate power, the social unrest, the spread of demagoguery, the advances of socialism, the appeals to bitter class hatred?"

Now, this financial writer to whom I have referred makes the square declaration that whatever

may be a man's own personal beliefs, there is no one who would not prefer to do business with a person who really believes in a future life; and that if there are fewer men of such faith in the world, it makes a big difference; indeed, it alters the very basic conditions of civilization.

It is not only in matters of character and integrity that faith in spiritual things makes for righteousness and safety. It is also true that this high and holy faith is necessary to the real enjoyment of life. I mean this physical, sensuous, everyday life which we live in this world. Dr. Watkinson quotes the Oriental proverb which says, "The lotus-flowers are not the Nile." The lotus-flowers are very beautiful as they fringe the river, as they shine on its bosom, but they are not the river; they are not the source of the bread men eat; they satisfy no thirst; they are charming, but they are not the Nile. So Dr. Watkinson says the natural or the physical must not be allowed to eclipse the spiritual in which it lives and holds together. Suns, moons, and stars are golden lotus-flowers of the river of God; they derive their splendor from him, they are sustained by him, and we must not permit the water-flowers to divert our thought from the God whose glory streams through the creation making it all that it is.

Wandering in the forests of the Amazon, the naturalist declares that when gazing up through

the leafy canopy at the midnight heavens, it is easy to mistake the fireflies flitting among the foliage for the brightly shining stars; so we are often apt to mistake the glittering things of the moment for the solid glories of eternity. But we soon awake to the mockery. Unless God puts into natural blessings a heavenly virtue and sweetness, they are utterly vain and unavailing. It is not what the eye sees, but what faith perceives, what the soul grasps and revels in, that has the power to make men either great or happy. When Moses was singing his swan song of blessing upon Israel just before his departure, he exclaims in his benediction on the tribe of Joseph:

Blessed of Jehovah be his land,
 For the precious things of heaven, for the dew,
 And for the deep that coucheth beneath,
 And for the precious things of the fruits of the sun,
 And for the precious things of the growth of the moons,
 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,
 And for the precious things of the everlasting hills,
 And for the precious things of the earth and the fullness
 thereof,
 And the good will of him that dwelt in the bush.
 Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph.

All the wonderful blessings of the fields and the pastures, and the wealth of the forests and the mountains, would in Moses's thought have been nothing without the last—"the good will of him that dwelt in the bush"—the smile of God. So, my dear friends, life will be leaden and unmean-

ing, a failure indeed, if there be nothing above the earthly and the physical in it. Above and beyond what the eye can see, faith must send forth her ventures, and enter into fellowship divine, if your life shall be touched with the divine romance and be glorified by the Eternal Presence.

II

Men and women who walk by faith are buoyed up by a comfort which the worldling cannot know. Saint John suggests the substance of that comfort when he says: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." Such a faith exalts the soul both as to its ancestry and its future goal. My friend, Dr. Shannon, of Brooklyn, tells how he took his little boy, only four years old, to the museum. At first they looked at the pictures, but the boy soon tired of that and said, "Papa, I want to see the animals, and the soldiers, and the guns." So he took him through one collection after another, until they came to the glass case containing a magnificent specimen of the orang-outang, when the father said, "Now, Frederick, I want to introduce you to your grandfather." And my friend said it was really pathetic to see the expression on

his little face, the shifting playground of repulsive frown and childish incredulity, as he gazed at the savage ape holding the huge club in his ferocious grasp. He found his tongue at last and said: "Why, papa, I can't believe that he is my grandfather. He does not look one bit like my grandpa. I just can't believe it." And my friend went away from the museum pondering on the conversation and wondering if anybody believed it without first coloring their imagination as Da Vinci prepared his imagination before painting the head of the Medusa. They tell us that, as a preparation for his ghastly task, the painter captured a brood of venomous, swelling toads, and after taking them to his house and tormenting them into a rage, he watched them until his artistic imagination was soaked in the hideous sight. Then Da Vinci, with his imagination dipped in the poison of those venomous toads, put the Medusa on canvas. So there are people who soak their imagination in apehood until they can trace an unbroken lineage back to the orang-outang; but it is an infinitely more profitable and comforting task to allow the intuitions of the soul to venture forth on the lines of Saint John's ancestral doctrine: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is."

He who walks by faith bears the sorrows of life with patience because it is but a transitory condition, and he knows that the greater part of his career, the infinitely more important part, lies beyond the realm of things, the domain of time and sense.

Wilberforce, in his old age, lost his only surviving daughter. Said he one day, "I have often heard that sailors on a voyage will drink 'Friends astern' till they are half-way across the ocean; and then it is 'Friends ahead.' With me it has been 'Friends ahead' this long time, for I have many more friends ahead than astern." Such a faith puts the world in its proper place. It is only a temporary condition. We can afford to bear up with a great many inconveniences in it, and keep sweet, if through faith in God we are looking for the eternal life of fellowship in heaven. How truly and how sweetly the poet sings of this very thought when he compares the experiences of life here to a wayside inn, which is but for a night, whether it be good or bad:

Ah, little Inn of Sorrow,
What of thy bitter bread?
What of thy ghostly chambers,
So I be sheltered?
'Tis but for a night, the firelight
That gasps on thy cold hearthstone;
To-morrow my load and the open road
And the far light leading on!

Ah, little Inn of Fortune,
What of thy blazing cheer,
Where glad through the pensive evening
Thy bright doors beckon clear?
Sweet sleep on thy balsam-pillows,
Sweet wine that will thirst assuage,
But send me forth o'er the morning earth
Strong for my pilgrimage.

Ah, distant End of the Journey,
What if thou fly my feet?
What if thou fade before me
In splendor wan and sweet?
Still the mystical city lureth—
The quest is the good knight's part;
And the pilgrim wends through the end of the ends
Toward a shrine and a Grail in his heart.

CHAPTER IX

CHRIST THE PIONEER OF HUMANITY

And they were on the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid.—*Mark 10. 32.*

CHRIST was going to the cross. The three years' ministry, which Lecky in his history of human morals says "have done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of the philosophers and all the exhortations of the moralists," were drawing to a close. Jesus knew he was going to his death, and yet he was the most eager of all the company. His little group of friends were disposed to lag because their hearts were full of dread, but Christ led the march. They were amazed that he was going forth with joy. His countenance was lit up with a joyous expression, like that which glows on the face of one who, after long absence, is again drawing near to his father's house. He knows that sorrows such as have never yet filled the breast of man await him there; by his alacrity he would teach his friends, and through them all that come after them, how noble a thing it is to suffer in a good cause. They would think of this afterward, and

take courage. He tells them plainly that he is going forth to be abused and insulted and to die, but he tells them also that after that is the resurrection and the eternal life.

Bishop Charles H. Brent, of the Philippine Islands, has just written a book entitled "Leadership." He begins with a statement of the meaning of leadership, the impulse in some men to lead, the desire of other men to be led, and this relationship thus created. A group thus formed can "lift the whole of God's big purpose for mankind a notch nearer the summit." The leader needs the power of the single motive. He can attain efficient leadership only by subordinating all within his personality to one dominant purpose. But this purpose cannot be a narrow or unworthy purpose; it can be nothing less than the social motive. Such leadership can be given only by a life of integrity. As there is to be oneness of motive, so also the whole life must have the oneness of integrity. But beyond integrity as a moral quality is the oneness that a man may attain with the Divine Spirit. Even the appeal to the moral nature, to the conscience, does not touch the highest point in personality. But with the vast majority of men the pressure of the unseen is so constant and deep that, however little they may reveal to their companions their inmost thoughts, it forms a subconsciousness as truly a part of their

experience as the sobbing of the wind is a part of the storm. If a leader lack this highest power, the time must come when his leadership will break down. This leads, in the argument, to a characterization of Jesus as the supreme leader of men. After summing up the requirements of the character of a great leader, Bishop Brent says: "We have such a leader. We have done everything conceivable to make Jesus as distant as possible, from obscuring him under a veil of theological and ecclesiastical confusion to reducing him to a mere local hero whose life went out many centuries ago." And he goes on to show that the leadership of Jesus Christ became a life before it was reduced to a theology; that it was a thing of the character before becoming a thing of the intellect.

I

Christ goes before us, leading in the world's thought in all matters of the greatest moment. Dr. Amory H. Bradford said in a sermon a while ago that in these days we are sometimes asked, "Is it possible for a thinking man to be a Christian?" But he says he would put the question another way, and ask, "Is it conceivable that a thinking man can do otherwise than accept Jesus as his leader?" For he gives us the profound and only satisfying answers to the deepest of problems of our earthly existence. If life is to be worth

living, if we are to have power and usefulness, if there is to be something of joy, there are certain questions which must be answered. We must have some clear and definite idea as to whether we are simply in the hands of a vast and heartless and everlasting process, or whether we are in the hands of infinite and everlasting Love.

No one else has ever given us satisfactory answers to these questions. Men use such words as power, law, force, but you know there is no comfort for your heart in such answers. What does Christ say? He teaches his disciples to pray to "Our Father, who art in heaven." Nobody else has spoken to us words like that. He says to us in substance, "Do not consult the wise men, if you want to know about the Person who holds the universe in his hands, but go into your own homes, and think of all the strength of fatherhood, and all the love of motherhood, and remember that as the heavens are high above the earth, so the love and the strength of God are above that of earthly parents."

No wonder Jesus said of himself on one occasion that a greater than Jonah, who was simply a messenger of God calling men to repentance, and a greater than Solomon, who was simply a wise man, was represented in himself, was among them. Christ brings men to God. He leads them in their thinking about God. He nerves us for faith's

enterprise of quest, and sustains us in its pursuit. Christ made men know that their aspirations to acquaintance and fellowship with God were not alien or exotic. When we listen to Christ we know that God's finger has touched us far down in our secret beings. The instinct of prayer, the faculties of moral desire and reverence, the wistful longing for something better than the conventional round, the intuition of trust and holiness—these stirrings of life are set up within us by the presence of Christ in this world of men.

II

Christ goes before us, showing us the way to personal development of character and noble personality. Christ is the world's leader in showing how strong character and charming personality can be developed and wrought out in the furnace of trial and suffering. The old Hindus tried to ignore suffering and get rid of it by saying that there is no suffering. The Buddhists said the beginning of enlightenment is the realization of the nothingness of things, and we have many modern examples of the revival of all this sort of teaching. But all the while the reality of life presses upon us. Men do sicken and suffer and die without any reference to their philosophy on the subject. Who shall bring us to wisdom? Who shall teach us

life's meaning? Christ is the only teacher who shows us that the God in the heavens who wishes us to say "Our Father" is not a God callous as to suffering, but a God living in the life of the human race, afflicted in its affliction, and bruised and wounded by its iniquity. Christ shows us that everywhere the love of God is seen in suffering and sacrifice. The compassion of men is not the accusation of his goodness, but the revelation and proof of it. The sorrows, the sacrifices, the martyrdoms of the world's helpers are his. Dr. Hunter, the English preacher, says: "What a gospel the cross preaches to men and women troubled by the woes of life! Standing up against the dark sky, it says that God suffers in and with his creatures and his children, that he is the chief of sufferers, that it is his pity and love and sympathy we see in the pity and love and sympathy of Christ and of all Christlike souls."

(Christ himself tells us that for the sake of humanity he sanctifies himself through sufferings, and Paul assures us that the Captain of our salvation could be made perfect only through suffering. Strong, beautiful, perfect character can be wrought out only through the discipline of struggle, and restraint, and disappointment, and suffering. Christ is the leader in this thought, that only in personal sanctification of himself, in personal holiness of character, can there be devel-

oped the personality that will be of most blessing to the world.

There are two great pictures, each of them by a famous artist, which bring out vividly this conception. One picture represents a woman in a hospital. The woman is a princess, fair and beautiful to look upon, but the hospital is most loathsome, because it is the home of a number of dying lepers. And this fair and beautiful woman is represented as wiping the face of a dying leper. That picture is a symbol of the dignity and beauty of social service. But there hangs by its side another picture by another great artist. It represents a woman in her secret chamber in the attitude of prayer. Beside her stands an angel. She is looking over the open pages of the Bible, which are illuminated, and the legend tells us that while she knelt there in that place of prayer, seven times she was interrupted, seven times there came a call at her door, a demand upon her love, upon her charity—a sevenfold recognition of the needs of her brother man. And seven times, with a patience and with a moral beauty beyond all description, she goes to the door, relieves these cases of necessity, and returns to her knees, to her attitude of prayer. And this is a picture of the supreme dignity and great worth of personal holiness. It is to such a life that Jesus is ever leading humanity. ,

III

Christ goes before us, leading us and teaching us our true relation to one another. It is Christ who teaches us that culture and learning and holiness reach their true climax and find their true mission only when they serve our fellow men. It is Christ who tells us that we cannot truly trust God unless we love our fellow men. Neither can we truly love God and not trust our fellow men. I mean if we really love and trust God, we must accept our fellow men as God's children, and know that in the humblest and poorest and meanest of them there is something of the divine childhood to God that makes them worthy of our sympathy and brotherhood.

Some one truly says that the two greatest words of life and religion are "trust" and "love." In reality they both mean the same thing. It does not matter whether we say, "Trust God and love men," or "Love God and trust men." Our trust in men must be a part of our trust in God, and our love for men must be a part of our love for God, for the God we know is incarnate in man. Just as it is of no use to say, as Saint John tells us, that we love God if we do not also love men, so it is of no use for us to say that we trust God if we do not trust men.

I will not learn to doubt my kind;
 If bread is poison, what is food?
 If man is evil, what is good?
 I'll cultivate a friendly mind.

I see not far, but this I see:
 If man is false, then naught is true;
 If faith is not the golden clue
 To life, then all is mystery.

I know not much, but this I know:
 That not in hermit's calm retreat,
 But in the storied busy street
 The angels most do come and go.

Who to the infinite would rise
 Should know this one thing ere he starts:
 That all its steps are human hearts,
 To love mankind is to be wise.

I will not learn to doubt my kind,
 If man is false, then false am I;
 If on myself I can't rely,
 Then where shall faith a foothold find?

IV

Christ clarifies our vision, and goes before us
 into the immortal life. It is Jesus only who makes
 us know that though the universe back into the
 darkness roll,

Two lights death cannot dim,
 God and the soul.

It is Christ who teaches us that eternal life begins here and now. He teaches us that immortality will never become real to anyone, as a belief, except through his getting into his life something of incomparable and eternal worth. When God visits a man and gives him the assurance that he is dear to him, immortality is no longer incredible. Science may make its guesses, but the hope of mankind rests in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the glorious consciousness of the eternal life which is known in redeemed hearts and purified lives. The apostle says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Words like those are themselves evidence for immortality. The breath of immortality is in them; they have the elevation and moral grandeur of a hope so great.

When William Jennings Bryan was a young man in college he wrote to Colonel Ingersoll and asked him for his views on God and immortality. His secretary answered that the great infidel was not at home, but inclosed a copy of a speech which covered the question. Bryan read it with eagerness, and found that he had expressed himself

about like this: "I do not know that there is no God. I simply say, 'I do not know.' I do not say that there is no life beyond the grave; I simply say, 'I do not know.' " What a cheerless program that is compared with the program of Jesus Christ! In those sorrowing days when he was preparing for his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus gathered his friends about him and said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And all around the world, in city and in country, in the palace of the rich and in the hovel of the poor, among the learned and intelligent, as well as among converts recently gathered from heathenism, men and women every day of the world are finding those words of Jesus true. Having lost the sting of death by the forgiveness of their sins, through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, they come to the end of their earthly life in peace, and realize at the last that Jesus does come to receive them and give them welcome into the Father's house. God help us that we may be comforted and strengthened with this glorious faith, so that we shall be able to realize the vision of the Christian poet:

On that old faith I will take hold once more—
 Now that the long waves bear me to the shore,
 And life's brief voyage is o'er;
 Near is the looked-for land—
 One wild leap on the strand
 And the dear souls I loved of old
 I shall again behold,
 And arms that held me once, shall hold again.
 In blinding ways of men
 Long did I mourning doubt,
 Saying, "Into the universe have they gone out
 And shall be lost
 In the wide waves of unseen, infinite force;
 For nature heeds not all the bitter cost
 But rushes on its course
 Unto the far, determined goal,
 Without self-conscious knowledge, or remorse."
 But now the time is come, the test draws near,
 And sudden my soul is innocent of fear.
 O ye beloved! I come! I cry
 With the old passion ye shall not deny!
 I know you, as I knew
 When life was in its dew;
 Ah, naught of me has suffered inward change,
 Nor can be change essential even in you,
 However far the freer spirit's range.
 Soul shall find soul; there is no distance
 That bars love's brave insistence,
 And nothing truly dies
 In all the infinite realm of woe and weal;
 Throughout creation's bound thrill answers thrill
 And love to love replies.

CHAPTER X

THE MARKS OF A GROWING MANHOOD

Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.—*Eph. 4. 13.*

SINCE by common consent of civilized mankind Christ is the supreme Man of our race, the one hope of full-grown manhood lies in a manhood that is growing after his kind and to be like him. To Paul's idea, the Christian ideal of manhood meant the development of all sides of man's nature into power and activity; the training of every part into harmony; the enriching of every faculty with whatever is sweet and generous and genial and beautiful. And we are sure that a true man after Christ will be the most noble and beautiful thing on earth—the freest, the most joyous, the most fruitful in all goodness. No picture was ever painted, no statue was ever carved, no work of art was ever conceived, that was half so beautiful as is a living man thoroughly developed upon the pattern of Jesus Christ.

Young men who are fitting themselves for influential careers are always put under stress of temptation to regard the temporal and physical aspects of life as more important than the spiritual and

eternal, but a growing manhood demands that these be kept together. Henry Ward Beecher once asked if men should dispute as to which is the more important, the forward sight upon a gun, or the hind sight? In its place each is the more important. If you take true aim, you must draw the fore sight through the hind sight, put them both in range, and work them both all the time. This is the only world that we can live in at present. Human life, human society, and civil government are God's means of grace. It is your drill-ground. And these means of grace are to be used as men use their machines. The world is grandly constituted to develop manhood in those who know how to use it. But it is a terrible thing to see how men squander manhood in this world; to see them pass through all this wonderful system of education in the civil and social world, and, instead of gaining, losing the best that is in them as they go. A man ought to be in the work of life like a piece of iron in a machine shop. He ought to gather, as he goes through the trying experiences of youth and manhood, symmetry, shapeliness, temper, quality, adaptation, so that when he issues from the further side, he is a full-grown man. But instead, we see men going out of this great workshop of human life which God has erected for the building of men, and they have little by little stripped themselves of their resources and come

out bankrupt and useless instead of rejoicing in a full-orbed manhood.

Let us study together briefly some of the marks of a growing manhood of the highest type.

I

It was Paul's theory, and it is borne out by the history of Christian civilization, that full-grown manhood can come only through keeping our eyes on the perfect ideal of manhood in the person of Jesus Christ. The leader dictates what the follower will develop in himself. A man who knew what war meant, once wrote that he would have more trust in an army of sheep led by a lion than in an army of lions led by a sheep. Man contains all things: the sheep and the lion, the coward and the Christ. If you are a coward, you will find men sheep—mean, timid things, always in terror for their skins, thinking only of their grazing ground, and under your leadership that is all that will be developed in them. But Christ came and turned his eyes in noble sympathy and magnetic interest on harlots, thieves, poor, timid laboring folk, and they left their ease and their joys, and they followed him, rejoicing, through suffering unto death. Out of these common, mean materials he developed heroes and martyrs and saints.

The glory of Christianity lies in the power of Christ to attract what is best in men and women

and arouse them to growth toward the highest manhood. Whymper, the famous mountain-climber, tells us that for a long time before he scaled the Matterhorn it had laid its spell upon him. No foot of man had ever stood on the summit of that mountain. The peasants who lived at its base declared that it could not be scaled. Many of the guides advised him to desist from his attempt to do what was not possible. There were other peaks that might be conquered. But the Matterhorn had laid its spell upon and called this man. At last, by a way that had been deemed impossible, he stood upon the summit. To-day knotted ropes hang in difficult places. Mountaineers less skilled can now reach that peak. So we look at the life of Jesus until we feel his spell cast upon us and he becomes our inspiration and strength. The ideal Christian life towers above us. Many men content to live in the low valleys and marshes of selfishness and greed tell us that the summit is unattainable. They assure us that the Christian life is impossible under these modern conditions which surround us. But if the spell of Jesus is upon us, we shall not be discouraged, but press forward and be willing to deny ourselves whatever is necessary that we may make the upward climb into the realm of ever-nobler manhood.

Whymper tells the story of a friend who joined him for a stiff climb to a mountain's summit. This

man came heavily laden. Science was to be regarded: his pockets were stuffed with books; heights and angles were to be observed, and his knapsack was filled with instruments; hunger was to be guarded against, his shoulders were ornamented with a huge nimbus of bread, and a leg of mutton swung behind from his knapsack. So the friends began to climb. All were carrying their own packs. None could relieve the man with stuffed pockets and bulging knapsack. As the angle steepened he began to groan, till at last the very cliffs were groaning in echo. He came to the point where one great jump had to be taken. The laden man came across, but minus some of his provisions.

We cannot carry everything to the top. Paul found that out and says: "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ." Manhood is the great thing; and money, or fame, or any physical success comes at too high a price if a man must barter his manhood in order to get it. If a man must choose between the baggage or a failure to reach the summit of a full-grown manhood, if he be wise, the baggage will go tumbling. Simple fare on the summit has more flavor than a sumptuous feast in the valley swamps.

II

Another mark of a growing manhood is the struggle against obstacles—to do every duty as it presents itself. No great manhood will ever be developed if we wait for ideal conditions in which to do the ideal thing. Perhaps you have heard the story of the man who died, and, on making his bow to Saint Peter, was, somewhat to his surprise, most cordially received and asked to state just how he wished things to be. He at once asked for all the things he could think of as needful for the filling up of his cup of perfect happiness, the things which in this life he had longed for in vain. They were immediately his, and he delighted in them for a time. But, at the end of one short century, Peter, on his return, was met with complaints. None of the things asked for had their old quality. Peter said nothing and went away. At the end of the second century he returned, and this time the man bitterly upbraided him. He said he was miserable beyond words. Everything he had demanded had deteriorated to such an extent that life was absolutely intolerable. He said, "This heaven of yours is a fraud." At this Peter held up his hands and exclaimed: "Heaven! Did you think this was heaven?"

This allegory is true to human experience. No life can be interesting to you, permanently, that does not mean struggle toward higher and nobler

achievement. This is the secret of immortal youth. Sometimes we see an old man in whose mouth everything has turned to ashes because no high emotion and no lofty struggle has possessed him. Then, again, you see another as old as he, but with all the keen interest of a child. To him all the years that he has traveled have been but a beginning. His is the eager delight of the endless journey. The difference lies in the art of learning to set ever higher and further ahead the delights that tempt you, so that year by year life grows larger instead of less. Just because you are a man, to be happy and strong and at your best you must struggle and climb and aspire as long as you live.

At a certain place in the Alps there is a monument to a guide who had perished when attempting to make the ascent of the mountain. The simple inscription on the stone is, "He died climbing." What a noble tribute to a noble man! And wherever we die, that should be the story of every one of us: To set our faces toward the heights and struggle upward to the last, that we may find that the last is itself but a beginning to still nobler career and achievement.

III

But, after all, the supreme characteristic of a growing manhood, after we have the true ideal, is

patience. "Till we attain." Keep your appetite for the best. Struggle for it. But the power to be patient and wait for it without surrendering to something lower is the supreme mark of a growing manhood.

John Bunyan has a scene in which Passion and Patience are the chief characters. Passion seemed to be much discontented, but Patience was very quiet. Then Christian asked: "What is the reason of the discontent of Passion?" The Interpreter answered: "The Governor would have him stay for his best things till the beginning of next year, yet he will have all now, but Patience is willing to wait. Passion must have all his good things now and here; Patience will have his best things last." You have there a very clear picture of the difference between men. True greatness waits on patience. In the company of William Pitt a conversation once took place as to the quality most necessary in a prime minister. While one said "Eloquence," another "Knowledge," and another "Toil," Pitt said, "The main requisite is patience." The same lesson is writ large in every great life. Darwin said to one of his friends: "If I had not been so great an invalid, I should not have done nearly so much work." Thomas Carlyle observes, "We will not complain of Dante's miseries; had all gone well with him, as he wished it, Florence would have had another prosperous Lord Mayor,

but the world would have lost the *Divina Commedia*."

Tennyson has been admired by all the world for his beautiful poems in which there is so much sung of unstained love between man and maid and husband and wife. But no less charming than Tennyson's love poems is his love-patience. He was early fascinated with the noble Emily Sellwood, and he might soon have married her had he been willing to surrender his ideals and to set before himself money rather than truth or art as the object of his work. For he had deliberately chosen poetry as the duty of his life, and hence, until circumstances changed and God willed otherwise, he patiently toiled and waited. At twenty-seven years of age he was earning a mere pittance, and there was no prospect of money in his high calling. Passion pointed out various ways of gathering a bag of treasure, but Patience was content to wait—fourteen long years, as it happened—till the divine clock struck the hour. Observe the sequel: "The peace of God came into my life when I married her," said Tennyson in his latter days.

Those of you who have read Robert Browning studiously have noticed how he likes to take up the cause of unobserved and apparently unsuccessful people. He has great sympathy with honorable failure after an earnest effort, but he makes

them fight and strive for a high ideal. They fight a good fight, and the manner of the fighting shows the character of their manhood. Take the case of Paracelsus, a doctor of the sixteenth century, who sought to acquire such knowledge as should permanently benefit mankind; he was willing to attempt the seemingly impossible, and to make enormous sacrifices, if only the goal could be reached.

I go to prove my soul!

I see my way as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first
I ask not; but unless God send his hail
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In his good time.

Christ, who is the ideal of our Christian manhood, is himself our supreme example of patience. When we are on the path of duty and doing our best, and are tempted to take some nigh cut to success rather than that of truest honor, we need to look to Christ. At Cana the mother of Jesus, anxious and distressed because of the shortcomings of the caterer, spoke to her Divine Son as if to suggest that he should act at once. "Mine hour is not yet come," was the reply of Jesus. This was the answer to much else in the life of the Saviour. He could bide his time. He had the strength to wait. Christ was content to live long in obscurity. For thirty years he lived in that little town of

Nazareth in the home and shop of a village carpenter. Did ever patience have a grander setting? And the man who is determined to grow to the full measure of this noble, Christlike manhood must bide his time, as did his Lord.

Oliver Wendell Holmes in his greatest poem, "The Chambered Nautilus," tells us how the little shell fish comes into being in that little tiny shell, shaped like a horn. Year after year the spiral grows, and as it grows the little mollusk draws itself onward and closes a screen behind on the small chamber in which it first lived.

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the last year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in its last-found home, and knew the old no
more.

And the poet finds in this growing life of the chambered nautilus, ever aspiring to something better, ever leaving the old and struggling forward to the nobler opportunity, a promise and a prophecy of the enlargement and expansion of the human spirit. Exulting in the freedom of career and achievement suggested, he exclaims:

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,

Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips, a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn.
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought, I hear a voice that
sings:

“Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave the low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!”

CHAPTER XI

FACING LIFE'S SACKCLOTH WITH UNBLINKING EYES

None might enter within the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.—*Esth.* 4. 2.

Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech.—*2 Cor.* 3. 12.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, in one of the most weird of all those "Twice-Told Tales" which have charmed two generations of readers, retells the story of a Mr. Hooper, who in the old New England days was minister in the village church at Milford, Massachusetts. He appeared one Sunday morning wearing a crape veil, and from that hour no mortal ever looked upon his face again. He was young, quiet, refined, and no one could suspect him of an act of mere buffoonery. He was about thirty years old when he first began to wear the veil, and he occupied that one pulpit all his life, until, one by one, the men and women who had looked upon his youthful features in his earlier ministry were all carried to their last resting place, and Mr. Hooper had one congregation in the church and a larger one in the churchyard.

Naturally, at first, there was a great deal of gossip, and even incipient scandal, but when the

startled surprise passed away it was only to give place to a vague dread. Children fled from the minister, frightened; among the elders the most frivolous were sober: his very presence filled them with superstitious terror. The veil, worn year by year, seemed in some mysterious way to separate him from them, and from his fellow creatures everywhere.

Of course, it was a matter that was talked about a great deal. People asked what sin there was upon his conscience, what crime had he committed, that he should hide his face from the gaze of men and women as though he would even hide it from the searching gaze of God. The only person who dared ask questions was the woman who was to have been his bride. He refused to answer her, and they parted, the veil upon his face, the crape upon her heart. On through middle age to old age he passed, and his last hour came. The minister of a neighboring parish knelt by his dying bed. He entreated the departing man to reveal at last the secret of the years. When the old man persisted in his refusal, the younger minister exclaimed, "Dark old man, with what horrible crime upon thy conscience dost thou enter into the presence of thy God?" Then the old man raised himself in bed, his breath heaving and rattling in his throat. He flung out his hands as though he grasped at life and held it back, and, with the

veil seeming still to incarnate the gathered terrors of the years, he exclaimed to the people around his bedside: "Why do you tremble at me alone? Tremble rather at each other. Have men avoided me, and women showed no pity and children screamed and fled, only because of the black veil on my face? What but the mystery which it so obscurely symbolizes has made its terror for you and they? When the friend shows his inmost thoughts to his friend, and the lover to his best beloved, when the creature no longer seeks to hide a secret from the most high God, then blame me for this symbol under which I have lived and died. I look around, and on every face I see a black veil."

If we can enter into the spirit of Hawthorne's teaching in regard to this morbid eccentricity, I think we may have some illumination on the theme we are to study. Our problem is how to meet the hard things of life.

I

One way to meet them is that of King Ahasuerus, who made the rule which we have chosen for our first text, that no one clothed in sackcloth—which indicated mourning, and anguish, and sorrow—should enter into the king's palace. The king would only let people come into his presence arrayed in bright colors and showing a cheerful

countenance. He was determined to shut out of thought and out of sight the hard and troublous questions which try men's souls. A great many people have tried to do that, but it has never succeeded. Goethe made it one of the rules of his life to avoid everything that could suggest painful ideas, but they found him out in the end. When the physician prescribed blisters for that strange Russian woman, Marie Bashkirtseff, to check the ravages of tuberculosis, the vain, cynical girl wrote: "I will put on as many blisters as they like. I shall be able to hide the mark by bodices trimmed with flowers, and lace, and tulle, and a thousand other things that are worn without being required; it may even look pretty. Ah, I am comforted."

When Marie Antoinette passed through the streets on her wedding day in Paris, strict orders were sent out to the police that the lame, and the blind, and the crippled, and the ragged were to be carefully kept out of her way, lest the sight of them should detract from her joy and happiness at her reception; but it was not a great while before that gay butterfly of happiness had a very close view of the wretched and the miserable.

We have in our own time a popular fad, largely built up on the idea of keeping cheerful and happy by shutting your eyes to pain and sorrow, and the hard things of life; but, like all the rest, it is sure

to fail. Philosophize as we will, pain is sure to find us out, and the arrows from the quiver of sorrow will pierce our hearts.

II

There is another way of meeting the hard experiences of our lives. Those people are mere materialists who are described as the people who eat and drink and are merry, because to-morrow they die. Many such people are simply curious about life and look on it as a play. They sound the experiences of pleasure and sorrow as they would go to a sensational drama. They are easily moved to tears at the imaginary sorrows painted by the novelist, or acted upon the stage, but it awakens and develops in them no deep human sympathy or brotherhood. Many such people look upon the open sores of the world simply to find there a new sensation. Some years ago, when Mr. Jacob Riis and others called attention to the indescribable horrors of tenement-house conditions in some of our great Eastern cities, and the degradation and shame of slum life, which had grown up almost unnoticed, it came to be a very popular thing in ultra-fashionable, wealthy society circles for women to make up slumming parties and spend the night amid the unspeakable degradations of overcrowded city slums. All this was a prurient curiosity, a false sympathy that had no

real sincerity back of it. There was behind it no honest purpose of helpfulness or brotherhood.

There are others who face life's sorrows and difficult experiences, realizing them keenly, but meeting them with the stoicism of the American Indian. The pain and anguish of human life is very real to them, but it is something to be endured; it is a part of the day's work. There have been some great souls of this type. Of such Dr. Robertson Nicholl says that they meditate on sin, and grief, and death, upon the vast sum of human woe, upon their little and slow means for diminishing it, till the heart spends itself in fierce and hopeless throbs. The thought beats upon the brain like a hammer on an anvil. The waves of mournful thought cannot be stemmed, but flow in vain.

III

It is a great relief to turn to the other way of facing the hard things of life. That is suggested to us by Paul's words which we have chosen as a second text. Speaking of the Christian's faith, Paul says, "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." Paul speaks of the older days under Moses with the veil on the face, but declares there is no veil on the face of Jesus Christ, and that Christianity is able to face the hard things of life with unblinking eyes and with bold speech. Let us note some of the things

that we must face in which Christianity takes away our fear and gives us courage.

1. First of all, let us note the hard problem of sin. That is one of the terrible facts of human life which we all have to face. Now, Christianity does not deal lightly with sin. Sin never seems so serious and solemn as in the light of the Bible and in the presence of the purity of Jesus Christ. I came across a little poem the other day, with no name attached. It sounds like Kipling. It illustrates beyond any possibility of mistake the Christian thought of the tremendous seriousness of sin. It says:

The three ghosts on the lonesome road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that stain about your mouth
No lifted hand may cover?"
"From eating of forbidden fruit,
Brother, my brother."

The three ghosts on the sunless road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that red burn on your foot
No dust nor ash may cover?"
"I stamped a neighbor's hearth-flame out,
Brother, my brother."

The three ghosts on the windless road
Spake each to one another,
"Whence came that blood upon your hand
No other hand may cover?"
"From breaking of a woman's heart,
Brother, my brother."

"Yet on the earth clean men we walked,
Glutton and Thief and Lover;
White flesh and fair it hid our stains
That no man might discover."
"Naked the soul goes up to God,
Brother, my brother."

Where, then, does the Christian get his boldness of speech when he faces this awful fact of sin? My answer is, At the cross of Jesus Christ. In the famous Yosemite Valley, in California, there is a place called "Inspiration Point," because from it you can command a view of the whole valley—forward, backward, this side, and that. So, in the center of the ages, in the center of the gospel story of the life of Christ, there is one great "Inspiration Point." It is the cross on Calvary. It looks back and explains the birth of Jesus to save from all sins; it looks forward to the fullness of the times when all God's redeemed ones shall be brought to glory. From the cross we get the true character of man's sin and of God's matchless love; from the cross, the only hope for a lost and sinful humanity. This is God's "Inspiration Point," and, standing there, we can understand Paul's vehement cry, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Another of the hard things of life which the Christian hope enables men to face with courage is the problem of sorrow and trouble. In the first place, we are encouraged with the assurance that

in the end it is to be banished. John saw in his vision the time coming when "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." But Christianity faces the fact that trouble and sorrow are a part of the experience of this earthly life, and does not make light of it, but faces it and overcomes it by putting the accent on the spiritual instead of the physical life. A great deal depends upon where you put the accent as to its effect on your vision. I once traveled on a railroad train where everybody was complaining because the brakeman, in shouting out the names of the local stations, uttered the word "station" very clear and plain, and dwelt long and lovingly on it, but snapped over the name of the station with such rapidity and lack of emphasis that no one who did not know the country knew where to get off. So, it is possible to put the accent of your thought on the physical life and surroundings until you lose all clear vision of the great things that make character that shall live forever. I can bear trouble, if it is only temporary, and is helping to fashion a nobler personality which is soon to come to triumph. Look at that great picture of Christ's. He shows us Dives, the rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen. What a table he keeps! faring sumptuously every day; and the thoughtless looker-on says: "What a success he has made of it!

Look at what he has done. Look how he has got on. See how he has got up. He has everything that heart can wish." Then there is the other picture—Lazarus, the poor beggar, in his rags and sores, whose wounds the dogs licked. There is trouble for you. He is hungry for the crumbs that drop from the rich man's table; and the same thoughtless world says: "There is a failure. Look at him—what a fiasco he has made of life! Could anything be lower, meaner, more miserable?" Ah, but wait! Lazarus has his troubles, but inside that ring of trouble there is one of the sweetest, noblest characters in the world. Let Christ pull aside the veil. Look at these men when character comes to its own, and your sympathy is no longer with Lazarus but with Dives.

The great students of natural science tell us that the music of the birds was, at first, in the morning of time, only the bird's cry of distress. They tell us that originally that which is now such delightful music in the forests and the fields was nothing more than an exclamation caused by the bird's bodily pain and fear; but, as the ages passed away, that primal note of anguish has been evolved and differentiated until it has risen into the ecstasy of the lark, melted into the silver note of the dove, swelled into the rapture of the nightingale, unfolded into all the vast and glorious orchestra of the summer woods and the tuneful skies. So

Jesus Christ shows us the way out of the discords of sorrow and trouble into the supreme music of character.

3. And this brings us naturally to that last hard problem of all, which every one of us must face, the fact of death. Christianity faces death with unblinking eyes. It recognizes that death is critical and serious. Christianity looks on death as terrible, not simply because it is the end, but because it is also a beginning. Paul looked on death as the last enemy to be destroyed, but he looked death in the face without blinking, with great courage, and, indeed, with great joy and expectation, because of his fellowship with Christ and the assurance that the divine love which had redeemed him would continue with him in that other room of life beyond the gateway of death. To Paul's idea life itself was one great and splendid whole. It was a stream which death did not check. We allow ourselves to be so shut in by our worldly, physical surroundings that we lose out of thought the consciousness that we are even now in the eternal life.

"Oh, where is the sea?" the fishes cried,
As they swam its crystal clearness through;
"We have heard of old of an ocean tide,
But who has looked on its waters blue?
The wise ones speak of an infinite sea,
But who can tell us if such things be?"

The lark flew up in the morning bright,
 And sang as she balanced on shining wings,
 Of things that she saw: "I see the light,
 I look on a world of beautiful things;
 But flying and singing everywhere,
 In vain have I sought to find the air."

So, just because we are living in the infinite, we lose consciousness of the infinite. If you are standing beside a river, you may mark where it passes the boundary of a certain wall, and mark again where it passes another wall; and you may study the stream as it passes within those limits that you have marked, but the limits are all of your making; they have nothing to do with the river. The part of the river we see is a part of the great ceaseless stream that stretches from the mountain to the sea; so the little span of the River of Life, marked by our birth and our death, does not cease because it flows around the wall of death out of sight. And the glory of Christianity is the assurance which it gives the believing heart of the continuation of that stream of life flowing on under the heavenly Father's love.

Alas for him who never sees
 The stars shine through his cypress trees!
 Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
 Nor looks to see the breaking day
 Across the mournful marbles play!
 Who has not learned, in hours of faith,
 The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
 That Life is ever lord of Death,
 And Love can never lose its own!

So the Christian can talk about death with bold speech, for to him dying is home-going. Dr. Hillis declares that this homing instinct is man's earliest, latest, and profoundest instinct. No white clover field ever allured honeybees as the unseen realm allures and holds the thoughts of philosopher, poet, and sage. Heaven tugs hard at the heartstrings. The soul's summer land influences hope as the magnetic pole holds the needle. When Tennyson was approaching his death, and wished to describe his going away from this world, he used these oft-quoted words:

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHRIST TINCTURE IN HUMAN LIFE

Christ died and lived again, that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.—*Rom. 14. 9.*

I am . . . the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.—*Rev. 1. 18.*

A GENTLEMAN was standing before the window of an art store where a picture of the crucifixion of our Lord was on exhibition; as he gazed he was conscious of the approach of another, and, turning, beheld a little boy, looking intently at the picture also. Noticing that this mite of humanity was a sort of a street arab, he thought he would speak to him. So he asked, pointing to the picture, "Do you know who it is?"

"Yes," came the quick response. "That's our Saviour," with a mingled look of pity and surprise that a grown-up man should not know. With an evident desire to enlighten the gentleman further, he continued after a pause: "Them's the soldiers, the Roman soldiers, and," with a long-drawn sigh, "that woman crying there is his mother." He waited, apparently for the man to question him further; then he thrust his hands into his pockets, and, with a reverent and subdued voice, added: "They killed him, mister. Yes, sir; they killed him."

The gentleman looked at the little ragged fellow, and asked, "Where did you learn this?"

He replied, "At the mission Sunday school."

Full of thought regarding the benefits of mission Sunday schools, the man turned away and resumed his walk, leaving the little boy looking at the picture. He had walked nearly a block when he heard the boy's childish treble calling: "Mister! Say, mister!" He turned. The boy was running toward him, but paused; then up went his little hand, and, with a triumphant sound in his voice, he said: "I wanted to tell you he rose again. Yes, mister, he rose again."

His message delivered, the little fellow smiled, waved his hand, turned and went his way, feeling that having heard the good news, he had done his duty by passing it on to another. This is the glorious day when we look each other in the face with happy courage and rejoice that though he was dead, though he died for us, yet he is alive and liveth forevermore.

I am indebted for my theme this morning not only to these passages which I have read, but to a young saint who lived nearly two hundred years ago in England. George Herbert was born of a noble family at a time when Christianity was at a low ebb in Great Britain. He was a young man of splendid gifts and great learning. He was an honor man at Cambridge, and when he entered the

ministry his friends at court were greatly scandalized, and pleaded with him not to give himself to such a mean career. But good old Isaac Walton tells us that to one of these court friends Herbert said, "The domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be the noblest furniture on earth; and though the iniquities of the late times have made clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of priest contemptible, yet I will labor to make it honorable, by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor ability, to advance the glory of that God that gave them."

George Herbert died very young, but he left some of the sweetest poems in the language, and, though his ministerial life lasted less than three years, it is said of him that his life was so saintly that the meanest men in his parish so loved and revered him that they would stop their teams and let their plows rest in the furrow when they heard his bell rung for prayer, that they might also offer their devotion to God with him.

It is this preacher-poet, George Herbert, who, speaking of the resurrection of Jesus, says,

He was all gold when he lay down; he rose
All tincture.

You must remember that Herbert wrote in the early part of the seventeenth century, and that in his day "tincture" was the name given to the substance which was the object of the philosopher's quest,

because its discovery would enable him to transmute base metals into gold. We know that this is what Herbert meant, for in his description of the risen Saviour in a fine Easter poem we have the same idea. He sings:

Rise, heart; the Lord is risen. Sing his praise
Without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
With him mayst rise:
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more just.

The clear sense of Herbert's lines,

He was all gold when he lay down; he rose
All tincture,

is beautifully given in Dr. George Macdonald's paraphrase, himself another preacher-poet. Macdonald says that Christ was entirely good when he died, but that he was something greater when he arose, for he had gained the power to make others good.

Here, then, is our theme: Christ is not simply a good Man, an ideally good Man. There is in him that supreme divinity, that Spirit of the Godhead, which gives him the power to make other men like himself. He is the divine tincture in human life, which can transmute men of ordinary human frailties into the true gold of holiest manhood. This little group of friends whom we are accustomed to call his disciples were very ordinary people. They were full of faults and frailties.

But under the inspiration of the resurrection of Jesus, and through fellowship with the ever-living Saviour, they became saints whose goodness has been the glory of the church and the encouragement of humanity in all the years that have passed since their day.

The resurrected Christ has the same power to make men good to-day.

I

Christ transforms us, first, because his glory and his goodness humble us, and then exalts us because he reveals to us that in our humblest estate there is in us some kinship to himself.

I have read somewhere the story of a boy who grew up in an English village. He had a beautiful voice, and the villagers thought it was a marvelous voice, and praised him beyond measure. Finally his fame was so noised abroad that a choirmaster in a distant city, anxious to recruit fine voices for his choir, journeyed to the little village to investigate the rumor. He found that the boy certainly had a strong, sweet voice; but there were many defects in it which the quick ear of the musician detected. He asked the boy if he would come to be trained. The parents consented, and the boy returned home with the musician, with the expectation of remaining several months. On the first night after his arrival the

choir boys who had had from three to five years of training were there to sing, and the country lad was placed within full view of the musician's eye. At first his face bore the look of rapt expectancy; he had never heard anything like that; then it flushed, then tears flowed down his cheeks, and the boy sobbed until the professor out of sympathy asked: "Why is this? Is it mother or home you cry for?"

"No," said the boy, "I never heard singing like that. I thought I could sing. They all told me I could; but if that is singing, I can never sing. Let me go home; it is useless for me to stay."

But the wise musician knew that this sincere humility was the beginning of true possibility.

My friend, it is only when we have heard the infinite beauty of perfect music that we know our own limitations, and it is only when we stand in the light and glory of Calvary and in the matchless sunrise of Easter morning that we know what the infinite love of God can do to make men good and holy and lift them up into communion with heaven itself.

It would do no good to make us humble by revealing to us the matchless goodness and glory of the risen Christ if it were not true that there was in us a divine kinship to him, and the possibility, through the inspiration of his presence and influence over us, to become like him.

I read only the other day an exceedingly interesting account of a man who lives in London who is interested in rare and beautiful plants. A friend of this man who had been in South America in the region of the Amazon brought him home a rare tree. In the winter he keeps it in the hot-house, but when summer comes he carries it into his garden. So beautiful is the bloom that he gave garden parties that his friends might behold its wondrous flowers. One summer day he noticed a strange thing that set his pulses throbbing—a singular fruit had begun to set. Sending for an expert scientist, they took counsel together. They were sure that this was the only tree of the kind in the city, and, so far as they knew, in Europe, and they could not understand from whence had come the pollen that had fertilized the plant. They published the story in the papers, and that story brought the explanation. A merchant wrote that years before he had brought to Marseilles a young plant from the Amazon. The pollen from that tree several hundred miles away had been carried on the wings of the wind, over hill and valley and forest, until it found out the kindred blossoms that awaited its coming.

My dear friends, it is like that with humanity. Lost and degraded and scarred by sin, still there is in us something of the divine sonship to God. We are helpless until the pollen from heaven falls

upon the blossoms of our lives. Christ put aside the glory of heaven, came down to earth, and set himself to grow in the midst of our human life. In life, in death, in triumph over the grave, we have in him a perfect manhood, glorified by the presence of Almighty God. Here humanity blossoms in perfection and yields its fruit without taint of sin. And wherever, amid earth's millions, the pollen of that divine life, all tincture in its vitalizing power, shall fall upon a human heart, something of the goodness and the loveliness and the glory of the Christ shall be seen.

II

The risen Christ has power to impart to his disciples his own joy in the midst of the sorrows and burdens of life. This was what he meant when he said that he would leave his joy with his friends, and that no man would be able to take that joy away from them.

In the biography of Champness, a famous English preacher, the story is told that when he was a boy of fourteen years he made a plan to see the football game between two rival teams. The month was August, the day was hot; but by ten o'clock in the morning the youth had completed his Saturday's task. Going to his father he made the report and asked permission and money for the football game. The father said, quietly, that

he had planned for the boy to take a package to a merchant in Manchester. In a moment the boy's hopes fell. In that household the rule was instant obedience. A half hour later the size of the package staggered the boy. It was almost as big as himself. Every moment it grew heavier and the day hotter. By easy stages the boy went slowly on, until the tramcar put him down at the other end of Manchester. Going into the store, he threw the bundle down on the papermaker's counter, and, hot and tired, turned away, with quivering chin and dim eyes, for his disappointment was very, very sore. A little later he started toward the door to take the tramcar home. Then the merchant called after him that there was an answer. He weighed the bundle, saying, "We will get some good linen paper out of this package," and then counted out the money for him. "Your father's letter says I am to give you this money to spend at the football game." With a bound the boy was back at the counter, with eyes shining like stars. Now, how light the bundle seemed! "O my!" he exclaimed. "I wish it had been four times as big!"

At last he understood, for the football field was at this end of Manchester. But his father had tested his obedience and concealed the great reward. Newell Dwight Hillis says that this is what God is always doing when he lays any duty

upon Christ's disciples. Christ imposes a yoke—yes, but the dry wood in that yoke ripens clusters for strength. Christ does impose a burden, but all of his weights soon turn to wings. This is a great message for us to learn this Easter morning. Are the burdens of life heavy? Then Easter tells us that though our burdens seem as great as the stone at the mouth of the sepulcher in Joseph's garden seemed to the women who came in loving tenderness to perfume the body of Jesus, there are angels of help and blessing for the friends of Jesus. There are no burdens too heavy on Easter day, for the heavier the burden we carry for Christ's dear sake, the greater the joy and the greater the glory of the reward.

III

The risen Christ has power to impart to us his own fearlessness of death and his own sublime confidence in the eternal life. Death was no more to Jesus Christ than the passing from one room into another. He took upon himself our earthly house out of love for us, and he went back again into the heavenly house to be our Friend forever at the right hand of God. And this confidence about heaven and immortality which breathes as an atmosphere in the presence of Jesus he imparts to those who love and trust him. My dear old friend, Dr. Daniel Steele, a saint who is still liv-

ing in Boston, recently wrote an article in which he said that he was daily in expectation of stepping into heaven, and therefore it was natural for him to lay aside, as far as possible, the earthly metaphors and to take hold of the reality, of which these are poor pictures. Standing at the threshold of heaven, he finds that he can without loss eliminate the jeweled walls, the gates of pearl, the glassy sea, the river of life, the harps of gold, the rainbow round about the throne, the streets of gold, and the material mansion. But he finds that he would like to retain the personal element, the angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, among whom are those whom he had "loved long since and lost awhile"; but even they do not constitute for him the greatest attraction of heaven. The real heaven for him is in two words—"With Christ." And that was Paul's heaven. He rejoiced that if he were absent from the body, he would be "with Christ," which was far better.

Some of you who hear me this morning are in the midst of the tenderness of the first Easter time after a great sorrow. I thank God that for you the day may take the sting of bitterness out of your grief. Death is not the end of our loved ones whom God has called home. Easter morning with the ever-living Christ tells us that it is only life in another room of our Father's house, a nobler, sweeter life into which they have

entered, and where, after a little, we shall join them in eternal reunion. A friend sent me the other day through the mail a little poem about "The Rose Beyond the Wall." I do not know who wrote it, but there is a vision in it that ought to comfort our hearts this Easter day.

Near shady wall a rose once grew,
 Budded and blossomed in God's free light,
 Watered and fed by morning dew,
 Shedding its sweetness day and night.

As it grew and blossomed fair and tall,
 Slowly rising to loftier height,
 It came to a crevice in the wall,
 Through which there shone a beam of light.

Onward it crept with added strength,
 With never a thought of fear or pride,
 And it followed the light through the crevice length,
 And unfolded itself on the other side.

The light, the dew, the broadening view,
 Were found the same as they were before.
 It lost itself in beauties new,
 Breathing its fragrance more and more.

Shall claim of death cause us to grieve,
 And make our courage faint or fall?
 Nay, let us faith and hope receive—
 The rose still grows beyond the wall,

Scattering fragrance far and wide,
 Just as it did in days of yore;
 Just as it did on the other side;
 Just as it will, forevermore

CHAPTER XIII

THE BIRD IN THY BOSOM

That good thing which was committed unto thee guard.—*2 Tim. 1. 14 (Am. Rev. Ver.)*.

I HAVE been reading recently a very interesting discussion which has been going on in certain literary circles in England as to the meaning of a paragraph spoken by one of the characters in Sir Walter Scott's novel, "The Abbot." In that story Scott makes Magdalen Graeme say to her grandson: "Thou hast kept well the bird in thy bosom. As a boy, as a youth, thou hast held fast the faith amongst heretics—thou hast kept thy secret and mine own amongst thine enemies. . . . Down, down on thy knees before the holy sign, which evil men injure and blaspheme—down, and praise saints and angels for the grace they have done thee, in preserving thee from the leprous plague which cleaves to the house in which thou wert nurtured."

Scott adds an explanatory note to the phrase "the bird in thy bosom," in which he tells us that it is an expression used by Sir Ralph Percy, slain in the battle of Hedgely Moor, in 1464, when dying, to express his having preserved unstained his fidelity to the House of Lancaster.

The discussion which has been going on is to

find out the meaning of Magdalen Graeme when she used this sentence to her grandson. With that discussion we do not need to go further at this time. But the striking phrase, "the bird in thy bosom," clung to my mind and kept revolving until it found its counterpart in the words of Paul to Timothy which I have quoted for our text. Whatever Magdalen Graeme might have meant, or whatever might have been the exact thought in the mind of Paul, I am sure that we must all agree that the noblest treasure which has been committed to us, and the one which it is of most importance that we guard, is the soul. In an old book entitled "Marius, the Epicurean," there is a paragraph which tells the story of a boy, in which it is said that "one by one, at the desire of his mother, the lad broke down his cherished traps and springs for the hungry wild birds on the salt marsh. 'A white bird,' she told him once, looking at him gravely, 'a bird which he must carry in his bosom across a crowded public place—his own soul—was like that.' Would it reach the hands of his good genius on the opposite side unruffled and unsoiled?"

In the Book of the Dead the ancient Egyptians represent the soul as a bird escaping from man's body at death. The soul in the sense in which I wish to study it may well be defined as "the bird in the bosom," which ever soars and seeks the

things that are highest and best—as that which “singeth low in every heart”—the spirit which refuses to be subdued by all the seeming victories of evil, which knows the right will conquer and declines to ally itself with the powers of darkness. And “keeping” the bird in the bosom is the same thing as not being “disobedient unto the heavenly vision,” but remaining true to the noblest ideals of youth.

I

We have here, I am sure, a great and beautiful theme. To guard our own souls does not mean simply to be good. It does not mean simply not to do wrong. It means something infinitely more. This “good thing” which Paul says was committed to Timothy, this bird in your bosom and mine, above all else means the individual soul with all its possibilities of noble career and achievement which is within the reach of each one of us. This it is which we must guard, or lose our own souls. Newell Dwight Hillis, in a recent address on Browning’s “Andrea del Sarto,” brings out with graphic clearness the poet’s great picture of an artist who ought to have been among the immortals, but who failed because a worldly, earth-clinging wife drew him away from his ideals. There is in all literature no better illustration of our theme. At twenty Andrea was the hero of Florence; his father was a poor tailor, but the

young artist carried all his earnings home to buy ease for his mother and honor for his idolized father. The youth was handsome, with bright eyes and quick wit. Laughter was always bubbling upon his lips; he was open and frank, and the proverb was that Andrea carried sunshine with him. He had the genius for hard work also, lingered long over the other masters, was up early to catch the tints and bright colors of the morning. He never tired of sketching faces, bright garments, brilliant scenes in garden, cloud, and sky. Then the change came. A selfish, wicked woman crossed his path, and he loved her. She was a bold, brilliant woman, imperious, pleasure-loving, and utterly selfish. She had grown like a scarlet poppy in life's wheatfield. She spoiled Andrea of his soul, as Cleopatra ruined Antony. She burned the idealism out of his life.

Nothing could be more pathetic than their last talk together before he died. Andrea says to her: "For you do know, Lucrezia, as God lives, that one day Michael Angelo said to Raphael, when the two were working on the palace walls in Rome: 'Friend, there is a certain young painter dwelling in our Florence who, were he given power to decorate a ceiling and adorn a wall, supported by princes and urged on by popes and kings, as you are, would bring the sweat upon that brow of yours, and put your gift to the utmost stretch.' Michael

Angelo said these words; Michael Angelo said them to Raphael. And I might have kept my place beside them, lifted my paintings just as high, had you lived in the heights and called me up, and had I gone home to your heart. God gave you a perfect brow and perfect eyes and more than perfect mouth. Had you, with that sweet pure voice, that my soul hears, as a bird the fowler's pipe, called me upward unto God, instead of downward to the fowler's snare; had you brought the mind, as some women do, and urged God and the glory, never cared for gain, the present by the future, lived for fame, climbed side by side with Michael Angelo, remember Raphael is waiting, and urge yourself up, struggle up to God, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Andrea, all three—why, Lucrezia, I might have done it." He had lost the bird out of his bosom—he had lost his soul.

1. The soul is kept only through work and struggle and effort in achievement. There is a profound truth in that hymn by Anne Brontë, written out of her own experience:

Believe not those who say
 The upward path is smooth,
 Lest thou shouldst stumble in the way
 And faint before the truth.

It is the only road
 Unto the realms of joy;
 But he who seeks that blest abode
 Must all his powers employ.

Arm—arm thee for the fight!
Cast useless loads away;
Watch through the darkest hours of night;
Toil through the hottest day.

To labor and to love,
To pardon and endure,
To lift thy heart to God above,
And keep thy conscience pure,

Be this thy constant aim,
Thy hope, thy chief delight;
What matter who should whisper blame
Or who should scorn or slight,

If but thy God approve,
And if, within thy breast,
Thou feel the comfort of his love,
The earnest of his rest?

2. If we are really to keep our souls, we must truly live. A soul may be frozen, may be smothered, until it ceases to be vital. Emerson tells us that he once heard a preacher who sorely tempted him to say he would go to church no more. Writing of it he says: "A snowstorm was falling around us. The snowstorm was real, the preacher merely spectral, and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him, into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed, or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his

profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not learned." But alas! it is not only an occasional preacher who loses the soul out of him by becoming simply an official instead of a man. These dead and dying people with big fat bodies, who bulk large in physical prosperity, are on every hand—the body strong and prosperous, but the soul smothered or dying or dead.

3. The real joy of life comes only to men and women who keep and guard the soul through struggle and effort and noble achievement. Such souls find their joy in their great service. So great is their joy that they are never willing to drop their work. You see the great painter dying with the brush in his hand. You see the great preacher and winner of souls, like John Wesley or General Booth, carrying his work right on through old age, never dreaming of retirement until God sends death, as the shepherd dog, to bring him home. In such men the soul grows mightier with the years, and they are ever famous for the joy of their lives. Dr. Jowett says that we can never drift into joy; that the people who are strangers to joy are the people who shirk every difficulty and never contend with a troublesome task. It requires a little pressure even to get the juice out of a grape, and it is certain that the fine juices of life are tasted only where there is a certain stress and strain, a certain pressure, a

certain sense of burden and task. Luther was plunged into a sea of trouble, yet the laughter of Luther was notoriously boisterous. Sir Alfred Lyle in his biography of Lord Tennyson says that the laughter of Tennyson was triumphant, and yet it was Tennyson who wrote "In Memoriam." True joy is not a mere escape from trial and struggle and sorrow. It is the victory over them, or through them, which crowns the soul and gives it a sense of dignity and glory.

No doubt many of you saw Henry Drummond on his visit to America, and others of you have read something of his saintly life, and remember how, after a noble life of service for the Master, he was called at the last to endure a long and trying illness. Many friends came to try and comfort him, but they found it a hard task, for he was always the brightest person in the room. It ever ended in those who came to comfort going away comforted themselves. He had kept the bird in his bosom and on the last day of his life repeated those glorious lines:

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend his cause;
Maintain the honor of his Word,
The glory of his cross.

II

One of the favorite suggestions maintained by many literary people in the discussion referred

to in the opening of this sermon as affording an explanation of the phrase "the bird in thy bosom," was that it referred to a happening that was not uncommon in the days of falconry. Scott's book, "The Abbot," has in it a great deal about falconry, and it often occurred when birds were being captured by the use of the falcon that a bird pursued would fly into the bosom of a man or woman for protection from the pursuing hawk, and often the person thus fled to for a refuge would hide the fleeing bird in his bosom, and keep it safe there until he returned home, and then set it at liberty in safety. Whatever may have been the original meaning of the phrase, it is certainly true that there is no surer way to keep our own souls and guard them securely than to use our strength as a cloak for the weak and pursued and helpless. Rattenbury, one of the passionate young English preachers, recently said, "The saved man is the saving man." You are not saved simply because you are unwilling to go to hell; a much better sign of the saved man is his willingness to go to hell to fetch somebody else back. Moses was saved when he was willing to allow his name to be blotted out of God's book in behalf of his comrades, and Paul was saved when he was willing to become anathema for his brethren's sake. Let us be sure that the truest way to strengthen our own souls is to hide in our bosoms the weak and

wounded birds that have been frightened and crippled by the sorrows of life. Edward FitzGerald, in one of his beautiful letters to Mrs. Kemble, speaks about that oft-quoted stanza of Robert Burns:

Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care?
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons through the flowering thorn;
Thou minds me o' departed joys
Departed—never to return.

After quoting this poem, FitzGerald tells Mrs. Kemble how a friend had related to him that he had one day started outside the coach passing through the Burns country, in company with a poor woman who had just lost husband and child. She talked of her loss and sorrow with some resignation till the coach happened to pull up by a roadside inn. A little bird was singing somewhere; the poor woman then broke into tears and said, "I could bear anything but that."

The song of the little bird overcame Burns and the poor woman who had just lost her dearest, because its gladness seemed to mock their sorrow. Nothing can comfort us at such a time save the consciousness that God's love is in our sorrow as well as in the joy of the bird, and it is for us to seek on every opportunity to make this love of

God, through Jesus Christ, real to those who are weak or in trouble.

Adelaide Procter tells the story of a young girl who lived centuries ago in a convent in France. She was sweet and pure and admired of all who saw her. Her work was to care for the Altar of Mary and answer the portal. Wars swept over France and brought the soldiers to the convent, and one that was wounded was given into her care. When he recovered he persuaded her to leave the convent. She went with him to Paris, where she lost her good name and everything that made life worth living.

Years passed, and she came back to die within sound of the convent bell. She fell fainting upon the steps, and there came to find her, not such a one as she had been, young and fair, but such a one as she would have been, a pure and noble matron. This woman picked her up and carried her into the convent, and placed her on her bed. All the years she had been gone this loyal friend had faithfully done her work as well as her own, and none knew of her disgrace; so when the poor, crippled bird was strong again she glided into her old place, and until the day of her death no one ever knew her sin. Could any woman better guard the bird in her bosom than with deeds like that?

Edwin Markham has a little song which ought

to leave our theme sculptured in our thoughts. The poem tells the story of an old shoemaker who was expecting the Lord to appear to him in his shop:

While the cobbler mused, there passed his pane
A beggar drenched by the driving rain;
He called him in from the stony street
And gave him shoes for his bruised feet.
The beggar went; there came a crone,
Her face with wrinkles of sorrow sown;
A bundle of fagots bowed her back,
And she was spent with the wrench and rack.
He gave her his loaf and steadied her load
As she took her way on the weary road.
Then to his door came a little child,
Lost and afraid in the world so wild,
In the big dark world. Catching it up,
He gave it the milk in the waiting cup,
And led it home to its mother's arms,
Out of the reach of the world's alarms.
The day went down in the crimson west,
And with it the hope of the blessed Guest;
And Conrad sighed as the world turned gray:
"Why is it, Lord, that your feet delay?
Did you forget that this was the day?"
Then, soft, in the silence a voice he heard:
"Lift up your heart, for I kept my word.
Three times I came to your friendly door;
Three times my shadow was on your floor.
I was the beggar with bruised feet;
I was the woman you gave to eat;
I was the child on the homeless street."

CHAPTER XIV

THE MAN WHO IS THE GARMENT OF GOD

The Spirit of the Lord clothed itself with Gideon.—
Judg. 6. 34.

THIS is the true rendering of this verse, though we have to go into the margin to get it. It expresses the exact meaning in our modern language. In the text it stands, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon," but in the margin there is this alternative which expresses in a clear and forceful way the thought meant to be conveyed—that in executing his great purposes God clothes himself with men, uses them as his apparel when he goes forth to battle for righteousness in the world. Israel is in a bad way. The altars have been pulled down and the idols stand on every high hill. God purposes the redemption of his people, but he sends his angel out to find a man, a man who is worth while, who has the characteristics God can use, and he will clothe himself with this man, and through his trumpet arouse the people to heroism and to go forth to overthrow the Midianites.

I

The first great thought of our theme is that God needs men. We are accustomed to say that

man can do nothing without God, and the idea is not quite so sure in our thought that God will do nothing without us. Some one has said, speaking of Moses and his career, that he was *the* man, and no other would do. In mind and heart, by education of the palace and the desert, he had been trained and fitted for his great work, and no one else could do it. Certainly a most impressive dialogue is that which took place beside the burning bush on the slopes of Mount Horeb between a commanding and persuading God and a shrinking and fearful man. Here is the Most High, who can lay Pharaoh's pride in the dust with a touch of his hand, yet he waits and pleads, and reasons with, assures and reassures, and almost drives this reluctant shepherd to the front. It illustrates the universal lesson of all history, the lesson of the incarnation, that humanity is to be redeemed through man. John Wesley's saying has been often quoted, that "God buries his workmen but carries on his work." That is true, but we must not forget that he continues to carry it on by the hands of other workmen. I am sure the Scriptures will bear us out in the statement that God often waits for men who are fit to be his messengers, with whom he can clothe himself to go forth to the world's blessing.

Joseph goes down into Egypt a dreaming lad, and through slavery and dungeon and trying

experiences he is developed into a man whom God can set in high places to carry on a great work. Daniel is caught up as a boy by an invading army and carried away into exile to live his life in a foreign land and to be taught in strange new schools lessons that bring out a peculiar manhood which makes him the garment of God among a heathen people. David, the shepherd lad, through struggles with wild beasts and still fiercer men, and humiliating persecution, comes to be the singer and the warrior as well as the king of Israel. And so you may go through history and the men stand out who, in their day and place, have wrought mightily for the uplift of man, for the honor of righteousness in the earth—men like Luther, and Wesley, and Washington, and Lincoln, and Roosevelt; men for whom the world seems to have waited for some great leadership toward righteousness and human progress, that God might do his will among men.

II

This is the noblest dignity of man, that he may be the clothing of God. Men have done wonderful things in the world. They have dived into the depths of the sea, and have made maps of the great deep, and can tell the story of the ocean bed. They have invented eyes by which they can see into the blue vault of the sky and trace the flight

of far-off worlds. They have tracked the stars and discovered the secrets of wandering comets, as well as sun and planet. They have plunged into the world of mystery and come back with the proofs concerning light and heat. They have studied the tongues of nearly all the tribes of men and reduced them to law and order and put them into type and book. Man has so quickened his intelligence that he can hear across the earth and speak under the sea, or above it, from continent to continent. He has so conquered nature that he can make the mountain waterfall light his cities and drive his trains in city or country. He makes the steam drive his ships and combine with the viewless ether to give flight to airy vessels in the sky. Science bears witness to the grandeur of man. Art bears silent testimony to his wondrous genius. Literature speaks of man's greatness. All this is wonderful and tells of man's dignity and nobility, his high position in the universe. But all these are as nothing compared to the fact that a man may be the vesture of God! a man may be the garment of the Almighty! There is no greater thought concerning man than the one expressed in our text, that God goes forth into the earth clothed in a man! If it is a high honor to be a scientist, if it is a great thing to be an inventor, if it is a noble thing to be a creator of literature, what shall we say it is to

be filled with God?—to live in the midst of our common life as the clothing of the Divine Spirit, thrilled by his presence and guided and inspired by him who is light and love and wisdom?

III

Now, God is no respecter of persons, and he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. If he clothed himself with Gideon, then I am sure that he will clothe himself with any man like Gideon. What are the characteristics of Gideon?

1. In the first place, Gideon was simple-hearted and straightforward—a clean man, full of honest purpose. That he was a poor man and a farmer was only an incident and amounted to nothing. He was a frank, honest, clean soul, and, my friend, that is what counts in the sight of God. The amount of money you have, the kind of house you live in, the accidents of fortune, or birth, are very insignificant compared to the character of your mind and heart. As James Orr, the Scotch preacher, says, the mind is its own place and may become to its possessor a palace or a prison. You enter one soul: it is a foul, contracted, base, poison-laden chamber, the inlets through which one might enter into it are choked up; its recesses are hiding-places for iniquity; what once bore traces of beauty about it is broken down and defaced. You enter another soul: it

is a broad and spacious habitation. There is a lofty and noble outlook toward heaven and upon earth. Each room is richly stored and adorned with things beautiful and pleasant; knowledge and art and religion have lent their best to invest it with dignity and splendor. The sunlight of God's favor shines in it; the blessings of good men are its music. What makes this marvelous difference? The answer is very simple. Nothing can make a soul ignoble but the harboring of ignoble thoughts, the choice of ignoble ends, the preferring of ignoble companionships, the indulging of ignoble lusts, and the following of low pursuits. Poverty does not make a soul ignoble; misfortune does not make a soul coarse; the reproach or the obloquy of men which may be incurred in a good cause does not degrade a soul. Nothing can make a soul ignoble but what it is, and what it makes itself by turning aside to the paths of evil. We read of fishes that have lived so long in dark caves that they have lost the power of seeing. It has left them. The eyesockets are there, but no sight. And so souls may mind earthly things so long that the very power of thinking things pure and noble and divine departs from them. If we would be the proper vesture of God, we must, like Gideon, aspire after truth and seek in our place, however limited it may be, to find the light. Such souls expand; they become vast, wide, high-domed,

many-chambered, beautiful, a place where God may dwell and give glory and guidance.

2. Another characteristic of Gideon was his worshipful spirit. He was a reverent, pure-hearted, worshipful man. I have read recently that there is a movement on foot to cleanse the Thames, the famous river that runs through the city of London. The Thames used to be called, in the rimes of the poets of Queen Elizabeth's time, "The Silver Thames." The swans glided between London Bridge and Westminster, and the silvery salmon haunted the river from the sea to its source. There are no swans to-day between Westminster and London Bridge, and no silvery salmon. The river is brown with the mud that is stirred up from its bottom, and the foul streams that flow into it. Yet the Thames, we are told, is being purified, and some day the salmon may return and the swans reappear. So the heart must be cleansed from the filth of worldliness if God shall come into it to dwell there. To keep the heart pure and fit for God's dwelling we must, like Gideon, retain the worshipful, reverent spirit through thinking about holy things and communing with heaven.

IV

If our hearts are kept through his grace, fitted for his dwelling, God will clothe himself with us and give us power. See what happened when he

clothed himself with Gideon. Nothing could stand before him. With his little band of three hundred unselfish heroes, he was more than a match for the great army of the Midianites. The illustrations are everywhere. See Peter, the weak, cowardly Peter, who denied his Lord at the accusation of a servant girl. But see him a few weeks later, when through humility and repentance he has cleansed his soul so that he becomes the garment of God, and he stands up to preach at Pentecost, and three thousand men are converted. See Moody, a very common, stammering man, whom nobody wanted to hear, but he cleansed his hands in innocency, he purged his soul with repentance and prayer, he gave himself to service in behalf of God's poor, and after a while he was fit, and God came in and clothed himself with Moody, and hundreds of thousands were led to Christ by that marvelous evangel. O my friends, are our hearts cleansed and fit to be the garments of God? The world needs our power, the church needs our power, and yet we are so weak and so helpless. O Spirit of God, cleanse us, purify us, humble us, that thou mayest clothe thyself with us, that we may minister to the world's needs!

If God dwells in us and we are his garments, then we shall be filled and sustained with hope of victory. In a gallery in Venice there is

a picture which reveals a spacious and peaceful Italian landscape, with the Master and a group of saints in the foreground. Saint Catherine of Siena, in the black and white garb of a Dominican nun, kneels at the feet of Jesus, who places on her brow the crown of thorns. In his other hand he holds a golden crown, which is to be the reward of faithful endurance. The golden crown is held where Saint Catherine could not lift her eyes to the face of Jesus without seeing it. That picture was the artist Bissolo's way of preaching to a timid, fearful world the comforting gospel that if we suffer with Jesus we shall also reign with him. And the closer we get to Christ, the richer our certainty of heavenly triumph. Phillips Brooks says that it is a beautiful conviction, one whose mysterious beauty we are always learning more and more, that the deeper our spiritual experience of Christ becomes, the more our soul's life really hangs on his life as its Saviour and continual Friend, the more real becomes to us the unquenched life of our dear ones who have gone from us to be with him. In those moments when Christ is most real to me, when he lives in the center of my desires, and I am resting most heavily upon his help—in those moments I am surest that the dead are not lost; that those whom this Christ, in whom I trust, has taken, he is keeping. The more he lives to me, the more

they live. If the city of our heart is holy with the presence of a living Christ, then the dear dead will come to us, and we shall know they are not dead but living, and bless him who has been their Redeemer, and rejoice in the work that they are doing for him in his perfect world, and press on joyously toward our own redemption, not fearing even the grave, since by its side stands him whom we know and love, who has the "keys of death and of hell."

V

But I do not dare close this study without a word to some of you who, through your indifference and neglect, and your sin, have shut God out of your hearts and away from the control of your lives. You have been brought up in such a way that you have never been entirely beyond the influences of Christianity. It may seem to you that you are not far from the kingdom of God. It may be that you are not far, my friend; but your face is set the wrong way. An American who was traveling in Ireland wanted to go to the town of Derry, and did not seem to be coming to the town as soon as he thought he ought, so, meeting a native on the road, he said, "Am I on the right road for Derry?" "Yes, sor," was the reply; "sure enough you are on the right road for Derry if you turn your face the other way!"

That would be abundantly true of the lives of some of you in regard to the salvation of your souls.

The one hopeful, glorious thing is that God wants to come into you and clothe himself with your personality. You have all seen some copy of Holman Hunt's great picture, "The Light of the World." You remember the picture. You have seen the door at which Jesus is knocking. The ivy is clinging to the door and weeds have grown up about it. The poisonous belladonna plant grows there. The artist seems to have intended to tell us that it is a cold night, the stars are shining clearly, and there at that neglected door, in the coldness of the night, stands the radiant figure of Jesus Christ. The night is illuminated by his presence. It is a splendid, kingly figure which stands there knocking and asking for entrance. It is the King of kings, who put aside the riches and glory of heaven and came down to earth and suffered and died for our redemption, who rose from the dead, having conquered the grave, and who now reigns in heaven, who comes back and knocks at the door of our hearts. He could break down the door and force his way, but he will not do that. He is a Suppliant, a Lover; he waits and gently knocks for admittance. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!" That is what he says to us.

Old Christmas Evans gives a wonderful description of the knocking of Jesus. He is described there in the heat of the sun, and the cold of the winter, and when the snow falls and the winds are biting, there stands the patient Christ. The seasons come and go, and there he stands, still knocking. Nothing prevents his standing there, prevents his knocking right through the years, and as they come and go, the lonely figure of the King of kings may be seen knocking. O my friend, there he stands to-day at the door of your heart. Will you open the door and let him in?

CHAPTER XV

THE VISION AND THE TEMPLE

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.—*Isa. 6. 1.*

THIS was the inaugural vision of Isaiah. That vision made a prophet, the greatest prophet of the Old Testament times! The greatest thing that happened that year was not that a famous king like Uzziah passed away, but that a young man like Isaiah had a vision of God that made his splendid career possible. There have been plenty of kings, but you can count the great prophets on your fingers. We can get along even without kings, but the world soon goes to rack and ruin without prophets, men who, lifted head and shoulders above the level, catch visions of God and duty and privilege for humanity, that makes them leaders of their age and the uplifters of mankind. The world could have better lost a thousand Uzziahs than have failed of one Isaiah. On the day that George III of England was born a young Oxford student on a quiet street in London, in a little meeting of scholarly youth, "believed to the saving of the soul," and obtained assurance of sins forgiven. It was as notable an event for the world as the vision of Isaiah. The birth of

George III was trumpeted to the whole earth, but the conversion of John Wesley was not thought of much account. Now the name of George III is comparatively insignificant, while that of John Wesley becomes more glorious every year, and the influence of his work, inspired by the vision that came to him in that quiet prayer meeting of students, reaches round the globe and inspires men in every nation of the earth.

Vision and life always go together. "Where there is no vision the people perish," says the Word of God. If we are to truly grasp our theme, we must get real hold of the essence of this great vision which made Isaiah a prophet of the Most High. The essence of the vision is in this, that for the first time Isaiah beheld the entire temple filled with the train of the Almighty, the presence of God everywhere in it. He had been accustomed to think about the temple as a building separated into various rooms, varying very greatly as to sanctity. There were places in the temple where the Gentiles were allowed to come. These were very common courts. There were other rooms into which a Gentile might not go on the peril of his life. But there was only one room, and that was a veiled and silent chamber, where the pious Jew hoped to find the presence of the Almighty God. So you can see that

when the young Isaiah, in his wonderful vision of God, beheld the entire temple, even the most common and secular portions—the places reserved for Gentile dogs, as they were often called—filled with the train of God, in every portion from the outer limits to the inner sanctuary, it was a marvelous revelation, that was indeed a revolution in the mind and heart of this man. Now there is in this theme, I am sure, something worthy of our study. It should take away many of our ideas of the separate compartments into which our prejudices separate our lives.

I

In the first place, I think it ought to teach us that a man is a whole man, body and soul; that our human bodies are a sacred trusteeship committed to us, just as truly as is the soul. Paul says the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And man, as a whole, is the temple of God. It used to be believed that the center of all evil was in the human body, and there has come down to us a sort of contempt for the body which still clings to a good deal of our thought. But that is pagan and not Christian. Christ spent a very great part of his ministry in healing the bodies of men and women. He ministered to the blind, and to the deaf, and to the lame, and the feverish, and the palsied, and to poor lepers, showing us

that the body was sacred in his thought. A proper estimate of the body—that is, a proper consideration that it is a part of God's gift of manhood and womanhood to us, that it is the temple in which we are to live and to worship, in which we are to grow and develop character and personality—is infinitely important. All the joys and sorrows of life, while we live in this world, are to work out their purposes for us in the body. All the good we are to do in the world, we are to do through the aid of the body. We cannot, therefore, afford to be careless about it. Reverently, in the fear of God, we should try to protect our health and develop our strength, and maintain at the highest degree of excellence the characteristic forces of our bodies, so that they will be effective engines which we may employ for use by the personality which through God's grace we are building up within them.

Because the body is only a temporary house and will, ere long, wear out in spite of all we can do, is no reason why we should be careless of it, but all the more reason that we should handle it with reverent and wise hands to get out of it the greatest possible service for God and humanity.

II

I think we ought to learn also from our theme that God is just as much interested in what

we commonly call our secular work as he is in that which we ordinarily denominate as spiritual. This is the temple of conduct, and God's train should fill all the temple. A great deal of harm has come from men imagining that their lives were, somehow, separated into compartments, as was the old Jewish temple. Man thinks his Sunday is, somehow, a separate room from his Saturday or his Monday. It is a sacred room, where the presence of God sometimes dwells between the cherubim, but Saturday and Monday, and the other common days of the week, are only a commonplace, an unsanctified court, where he may cheat the Gentiles if he can.

Now, that is not a Christian idea of life. Christ and Paul were constantly inspiring in men a recognition of the sacredness and worth of common life, and a consecration of the everyday toil. And it is only by so regarding our lives that they gather dignity and greatness. Soon after the Spanish-American War, when General Leonard Wood refused about ten times as much salary to leave his place in the army and his work in Cuba to go into commercial life, and said he must hurry back because there was yellow fever there that must be eradicated, he gave us a glimpse of this Christlike vision of the sanctity of the common, everyday life of mankind. Many men think yellow fever is a thing to run away

from; but here was a man who did not run away from it, but ran back to it to put his brain and his skill to work to clean up that accursed island and to save the wretched thousands there who had already suffered so much from a pest that had wasted them for generations. Until that work was done no other service was attractive to this man. I don't ask what church a man like that belongs to, but I say that that is the real recognition of the sanctity of common life.

Lyman Abbott says that when a flagman sees a little, toddling infant on the track—as one did the other day—and runs out at the hazard of his life, and catches the child, and flings it to one side, to be himself struck down, and broken, and bruised, and killed by the onrushing train, we do not ask whether he is a Protestant or Roman Catholic, a Jew or a Christian; we simply say that that man did a Christian thing. He took up the cross and followed Christ, whether he had ever heard of Christ or not. For there are many who wear the cross of Christ on their bosoms and say, "We follow Christ," that are walking in the opposite direction; and there are those who never saw Christ clearly, who wear the cross of Christ in their hearts and not on it, and, though they know it not, follow him.

I am sure that a clear recognition of the sanctity of everyday life will give us the bigger men

that we need in all departments of human life. Realize that God is interested in what kind of a carpenter you are, in the kind of cooking you do, in the character of the business you carry on, as much as he is in the communion vow you take, and it will make your whole character and personality expand. Such a conception will give us men and women too big to lie, or be mean, or cheat; men whose common traffic in every common day shall know the presence of "the trailing garments of the Lord."

John Elliott, perhaps our greatest American artist now living, the man who painted the ceiling for the Boston Public Library, where on a canvas fifty feet square he has represented the twenty Christian centuries as horses led by the hours, winged female figures, out of the mists of the past into the illumination of the present, and who has more recently finished the "Diana of the Tides," which now covers the end wall of the right-hand gallery of the new National Museum at Washington—a wonderful picture—has recently attracted great attention. But it is the man and his spirit rather than his pictures that I wish to inspire us. When he had just finished this last great picture in Rome, that terrible earthquake in Southern Italy came, and this artist, who was just touching the climax of his career, dropped his brush at the first call for volunteers and went

down to Messina to help. He did not care what, so he helped. Those are the only people who really help in this world. Actually, he played the part of stevedore for ten days on a relief ship. He wrote back to a friend, "I have dropped my last knuckle down the hold this morning, and I have only two fingers left that I can wash." When that sort of work was over they put him in charge of building the little houses that America contributed, and he put all his artistic skill and genius into making those houses beautiful, and gave himself to it with tireless persistence and joyous abandon as long as he could help. Now, my friends, this man, a writer tells us in one of the current magazines, "has an artistic temperament." Now, if that is the artistic temperament, it is just the temperament every man and woman of us needs. It is not the temperament that is self-centered, whining, ineffectual. It is the temperament that does whatever comes to hand, as well as it can, for sheer love of the task and of beautiful workmanship; that through imagination wins to sympathy, and through imagination grasps the opportunity to do practical work beautifully where others would only do it practically. It is the temperament eternally boyish and buoyant, which is on the side of sweetness and light.

If we look at our work like that, how fresh and breezy and interesting and romantic it will

become! and our souls will be able to find rest and peace amid the commonest experiences of every day. Some unknown singer must have felt this truth when he sang:

When spurred by tasks unceasing or undone,
You would seek rest afar,
And cannot, though repose be rightly won,
Rest where you are.

Neglect the needless; sanctify the rest;
Move without stress or jar;
With quiet of a spirit self-possessed,
Rest where you are.

Not in event, restriction, or release,
Not in scenes near or far,
But in ourselves is restlessness or peace,
Rest where you are.

Where lives the soul, lives God; his day, his Word,
No phantom mists need mar:
His starry nights are tents of peace unfurled:
Rest where you are.

III

Our theme leads us to the conclusion that all the world, and all our life in it, is filled with the train of the Almighty. It is all God's world, and our life is all under his care. This thought suggests some very helpful visions.

1. It suggests that all truth is God's truth, whether it comes to us by way of the prophet's vision in the Old Bible, or by the apostles' inspiration through the New Testament, or by way of

the geologist's spade, or the naturalist's photograph, the telescope of the astronomer, or the laboratory of the chemist. There was a time when many good people were wonderfully scared when new truths were revealed in the strata of the earth, or through the careful peering into the mysteries of chemical life by the scientists; but such fear is dying out of the world, and it will soon die altogether. God has more than one Bible. He has the Bible which comes down to us on the printed page, but he has also his Bible that is written in rock by the fingers of the centuries. He has another Bible that he prints over again every springtime, that is written in green grass and waving trees and blossoming flowers. David wrote the Psalms for one Bible, and thrushes, and larks, and robins, and mocking birds, and nightingales sing the Psalms for another. All the worlds and all the Bibles are God's, and it is not correct to say that one kind of truth is a Bible truth, and another kind of truth is scientific truth, as though they were at war. All truth is truth, the utterance of Almighty God by the breath of his lips, or the touch of his hand, giving expression to the beauty and light and love of the divine nature.

2. Such a conception teaches us also that sorrow and joy, victory and defeat are all a part of God's plan. His train fills the whole temple

of life. If you have ever been in Antwerp, you must have noticed how every fifteen minutes the bells in the great tower ring out on the air their sweet notes in soft melody, which falls like a delicious rain of music, dropping from the heavens, as tender and as holy as the song of angels. Those quarter-hour chimes remind you of the "Golden Bells" about which Edgar Allan Poe exclaims:

What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
 Through the balmy air of night
 How they ring out their delight!
 From the molten golden notes,
 And all in tune.

But every full hour of those Antwerp bells, amid their shower of liquid notes of silver, there ring out the solemn strokes of the great bell, with iron tongue, deep and heavy; and these heavy tones fill you with a feeling of awe, and you remember the "Iron Bells" about which Poe writes:

What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
 In the silence of the night,
 How we shiver with affright
 At the melancholy menace of their tone!
 For every sound that floats
 From the rust within their throats
 Is a groan.

And so as you listen, hour after hour, to the chimes, the tender melody of the smaller, sweeter

bells reminds you of the joys and gladness of life and the mercy and the love of God, and the deep, solemn undertones that come at each full hour speak to you of the tears and the struggles and the sorrows of life, and the justice and judgment of God, and you come to feel that they are all a part of the same great harmony. And if we catch the vision of Isaiah with clear eyes, we shall come to know and feel that God has the same purpose for us in joy as in sorrow, in victory as in defeat.

The cry of man's anguish went up unto God:

“Lord, take away pain—

The shadow that darkens the world thou hast made,

The close-coiling chain

That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs

On the wings that would soar—

Lord, take away pain from the world thou hast made,

That it love thee the more!”

Then answered the Lord to the cry of his world:

“Shall I take away pain,

And with it the power of the soul to endure,

Made strong by the strain?

Shall I take away pity, that knits heart to heart,

And sacrifice high?

Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire

White brows to the sky?

Shall I take away love, that redeems with a price

And smiles at its loss?

Can ye spare from your lives, that would climb unto
mine,

The Christ on his cross?”

CHAPTER XVI

THE UNRECOGNIZED MINISTRIES OF LIFE

But he that was healed knew not who it was.—*John 5. 13 (Am. Rev. Ver.)*.

THIS is one of the most picturesque of all the stories told about Jesus. It is at the Pool of Siloam, which was fed by a spring or fountain, and had a great reputation for the healing quality of its waters at certain times. The rumor was that an angel came down sometimes and troubled the waters, which is probably only the poetical way of telling that at certain seasons the water was far more strongly impregnated with medicinal virtues than at other times. Cripples were brought there and rheumatic people came from far and near. So popular was the place that some seemed to have had a long wait. This man, with whom we are concerned, had had an astounding wait of thirty-eight years. And when Jesus asks him about it he complains that he is not able to push his way when the water is in proper condition, having no one to help him, and at other times it is useless. Somehow there is something in this story which makes me suspicious that this man must have gotten so accustomed to begging that he is like some other people

we have known, who would much prefer to beg with one arm than work with two. But it was not Christ's way to refuse compassion, even to the unworthy, so the Saviour said to him, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." It was like a shot out of a rifle, this voice of authority, and before he knew what he was doing, the man was on his feet, and his bed was on his back, and he was gone.

Now, all this was on the Sabbath day, and the Pharisees, those great sticklers for propriety, got after him. He could lie there until he was dead, so far as they were concerned, and for all the help they would give him, but he must not get well on the Sabbath. So they were anxious to get hold of the man who had healed him. But there he was unable to help them. Jesus had been unknown to him, and he had been so rejoiced over being made well that he had not even inquired his name. He was healed, that he knew, but who it was that healed him, he could not tell. For thirty-eight years he had lain by the side of the pool, where God sometimes ministered to men's bodies, and then there came by him the Incarnation of God himself, and healed him, but he did not know that he had been in touch with the Divine. The ministry had been wrought, but he had not recognized from whence it came. It surely will not be without profit for us to note

some of the methods of ministration by which God heals both the bodies and the souls of men, which are often unrecognized.

I

The outdoor, natural world of sky, and fields, and forests, and meadows, and pastures, green with foliage, often thus minister to us. They minister to our health, to the sanity of our minds and to the kindliness of our disposition. Nature, indeed, is not only God's great physician, but his most magnificent sanatorium. Wordsworth says:

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.

In what seems to me the finest American poem printed during the past year, "The Song of the Stone Wall," by that wonderful blind, deaf, and dumb woman, Helen Keller, who has become one of the most interesting personalities in the world,

she paints a living, breathing picture of those hardy Pilgrims and Puritans who built the stone walls in New England. Nothing could be sweeter than her interpretation of the ministry of the spring-time beauty and glory to their longing hearts and ambitious souls:

Beauty was at their feet, and their eyes beheld it;
 The earth cried out for labor, and they gave it.
 But ever, as they saw the budding spring,
 Ever as they cleared the stubborn field,
 Ever as they piled the heavy stones,
 In mystic visions they saw the eternal spring.
 They raised their hardened hands above the earth,
 And beheld the walls that are not built of stone,
 The portals opened by angels whose garments are of
 light;
 And above the radiant walls of living stones
 They dreamed vast meadows and hills of fadeless green.

Literature abounds in this ministry of nature. In her "Fishin' Jimmie" Mrs. Slosson tells of a little French Canadian girl. Her mother was a tramp, and the girl had developed into a wild little heathen. The mother fell suddenly dead near the village, one day, and the child was found clinging to her mother's body. The girl's body and soul were shaken by bitter sobs, and when they tried to take her away she fought like a young wildcat. There was in the crowd a small boy who knew a saintly old man who was known as "Fishin' Jimmie," and he brought him to the spot. Very tenderly that quaint old man lifted

the child in his arms and took her away with him. Nobody seems to have known anything about the taming of the little savage, but a short time afterward she and "Fishin' Jimmie" were seen on the margin of the brook, each with a fish-pole. The old saint kept the child for weeks, and when she went at last to a good home she had exchanged her wildness for a tender, affectionate nature. Then people wondered how the change was wrought. They asked Jimmie, but his explanation seemed to breathe an air of mystery. "'Twas fishin' done it," he said; "only fishin'; it allers works. The Christian religion itself had to begin with fishin', ye know."

And nature not only ministers to our sense of the beautiful and the gracious, it not only heals oftentimes our irritableness and impatience, but it also has the power to awe us and inspire us to worship. Coleridge, in the "Hymn Before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouny," illustrates how the sublime things in nature heal and inspire the heart. Coleridge sings,

Entranced in prayer
I worship the Invisible alone.

His inspiration increases as he advances, till he exclaims:

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines sloap amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!

Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
 Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
 Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
 Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
 Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?
 God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
 Answer! and let the ice-planes echo, God!
 God! sing ye meadow streams with gladsome voice!
 Ye pine-groves with your soft and soul-like sounds!
 And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow.
 And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!
 Thou too, hoar mount, with thy sky-pointing peaks,
 Rise like a cloud of incense from the earth!
 Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
 Thou dread ambassador from earth to heaven,
 Great Hierarch! Tell thou the silent sky,
 And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
 Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

II

Another one of the sources of healing ministry that are often unrecognized by us is the ministry that comes from laughter and good cheer. I presume few of us appreciate how true Solomon's declaration in the book of Proverbs is, when he tells us that "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Many years ago, when Artemus Ward died, James Rhoades wrote a poem which suggests an exceedingly interesting thought about the world beyond. Mr. Rhoades said of that buoyant maker of laughter:

Is he gone to a land of no laughter,
 This man that made mirth for us all?

Proves death but a silence hereafter
 From the sounds that delight or appall?
 Once closed, have the lips no more duty,
 No more pleasure the exquisite ears;
 Has the heart done o'erflowing with beauty,
 As the eyes have with tears?

Nay, if aught be sure, what can be surer
 Than that earth's good decays not with earth?
 And of all the heart's springs none are purer
 Than the springs of the fountains of mirth.
 He that sounds them has pierced the heart's hollows,
 The places where tears are and sleep;
 For the foam-flakes that dance in life's shallows
 Are wrung from life's deep.

He came with a heart full of gladness
 From the glad-hearted world of the West—
 Won our laughter, but not with mere madness,
 Spake and joked with us, not in mere jest;
 For the man in our heart lingered after,
 When the merriment died from our ears,
 And those that were loudest in laughter
 Are silent in tears.

On the death of Mark Twain Dr. Robertson Nicoll, writing with grateful appreciation of Twain, and recalling this poem of Mr. Rhoades, comments on it, that while cruel, wanton, poisonous laughter, and laughter born of sarcasm, irony, and satire will surely be excluded from heaven, we still may have assurance that laughter as the expression of free, exuberant, spontaneous joy will continue, or will be revived, in the great glad world to come. The best thing in the whole world is the ringing laughter of a child. There is nothing so musical,

so satisfying. And yet the Bible tells us that in the heavenly city boys and girls play in the streets thereof. Here laughter is a medicine, and I think we ought to allow its ministrations freer rein, but in that upper kingdom, where none shall say "I am sick," laughter, which has been robbed of its spontaneity by sorrow and care, shall ring forth again with all the joy and abandon of childhood.

III

One of the great sources of healing to the minds and hearts of men is found in music, and yet many are healed by it, restrained by it from evil, inspired by it to better things, without recognizing what it was that ministered to them. One of the most interesting stories in the career of that exceedingly interesting man, David, is the story of his undertaking to charm away the melancholy and the evil spirit that harassed and made miserable the life of King Saul. David had learned to play his harp on the hills where he tended his sheep. What a versatile fellow he was! Shepherd, harpist, poet, warrior—a wonderful man was David! No doubt he threw into his harp much of the breeziness of his own joyous nature, and of the hills and the woods which were so dear to him. And we are told that for a long time it was a great benediction to poor old Saul, and lightened his burdens and cheered his heart. But

after a while Saul's sins let the darkness down over his soul so that even the music of David could not illuminate it or charm it away, and Saul threw his javelin at David because his music had no longer power to comfort him.

Joseph Parker, commenting on David becoming a harp-player after he had been anointed to be king, says David might have said, when they wanted him to go and play to Saul: "Play the harp! Why, I am king. Why should I waste my time in attempting to prolong the life of the man who is upon my throne? The sooner he dies the sooner I shall reign. Not one soothing note will I evoke from my harp!" David would have lost much of his beauty to us if he had said that. There are two ways of looking at this harp-playing. To a mere outsider it was harp-playing; to David it was an attempt to help a man by driving away an evil spirit. In playing the harp David was doing a great spiritual work. He was a minister of healing. So Christ is the inspirer of all the greatest music in the world, and we should think of it not as entertainment, but as one of God's methods of ministering healing to the minds and hearts of men and women.

IV

The ministration of a mental and moral atmosphere sweetened and perfumed by love and good-

ness is one of the most powerful factors in the world for the healing of the soul, and yet often unrecognized by us at the time. Many a man growing up in the atmosphere of a home and family life that is pervaded with the spirit of worship and the atmosphere of love, which holds his wandering fancies and his straying feet to the right path, takes it as a matter of course at the time, but long years after, looking back on that early life, many a man, with a bounding heart and tearful eyes, is conscious that in those days he was living in the atmosphere of heaven, though he did not recognize it.

And what a Christian father and mother, through devotion and love and service, do for the climate of the home, the wide preaching of the gospel and the persistent pushing forward of the Christian evangel are steadily doing for the spiritual climate of the world. Few of us recognize how much this means. Physicians are beginning to understand more clearly than ever the tremendous benefits of climate in healing the diseases of the physical body. People ill almost to death, taken into another climate, with a different atmosphere, are often healed simply by breathing, unconsciously, the air of the new land. So it is the mission of Christianity to transform the climate of the world, and one cannot help but thank God in the midst of all the discouragements for the

many encouraging indications which point to the success of this great undertaking of God through Jesus Christ.

On the summit, on the borderland between the republics of Argentina and Chile, cast from the cannon of the two nations, "The Christ of the Andes" was erected at the time of the border dispute, when the king of England acted as arbitrator. On a gigantic column, surrounded by a globe on which the configuration of the earth is outlined, this colossal figure of the Christ, twenty-six feet in height, stands, holding a cross in one hand, extending a blessing with the other.

The conception of this monument came from a noble Christian woman of Argentina, who raised the funds to build it, and a venerable Christian priest. The base of this great monument bears in Spanish the following legend: "Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than the people of Argentina and Chile break the peace which they have sworn to maintain at the feet of Christ the Redeemer." One cannot recall such a fact without looking forward with hope to the time when He who came to make peace between man and God, and one of whose great titles is the Prince of Peace, shall so have changed the spiritual climate of the world that such monuments as "The Christ of the Andes" shall stand on the borderlands of all the great nations of the world!

CHAPTER XVII

THE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.—*Rom. 8. 2.*

THE all-important thing about a life is its spirit. Everything else is accidental and transitory. The kind of house a man lives in, the clothes he wears, whether for the mind or for the body, are insignificant compared to the spirit in which he lives. Sometimes a man becomes so immersed in business and so absorbed by it that he imagines his business is his life. But there never was a business yet so vast or so important but that it was an insignificant thing compared to the spirit in which it was carried on. Men have lived in a romantic and heroic spirit in a cave, or a log cabin, or a dungeon, and other men have lived in a base, slavish spirit in a palace.

In the long run a life must always be judged by its spirit—by the spirit even more than the deeds. Take Napoleon, for example. He was not an unmixed curse to France or to the world. He did many great and splendid things. He gave France a code of laws of immense value. He gave her a system of public improvements that endured for generations. He performed a great many noble deeds. But the spirit of the man

and the spirit of his life was selfish, and he will be judged through the long ages and condemned on account of his spirit. Compared with the career of Napoleon, that of George Washington seems in many ways commonplace, but the spirit of his life was so full of unselfishness that it lifted him up among the great and the immortal. Through all ages men will hold him in honor and glory because of his spirit. It is our purpose at this time to study the spirit of the Christian life, that we may in the light of such a study search our own hearts and truly measure our own spirit. We do not wish to be self-deceived. And it is very easy to be self-deceived. John had been associating with Jesus for a long time when, on one occasion, filled with indignation because they would not welcome Christ and his friends in a certain town which they were about to visit, he asked the privilege to pray for fire to fall from heaven and destroy the inhospitable people. Jesus quietly turned to him and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." And so it behooves us to keep a watchful eye on the spirit of our lives. If the spirit is truly Christian, then the life will follow.

I

The first characteristic of the Christian spirit is faith. Faith is a channel through which the heavenly life comes in and takes possession. We

are assured in the Word of God that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. And again, "By grace are ye saved, through faith." Faith is the only atmosphere through which the spiritual eye may behold the beauties and glories of the unseen world. And do not imagine that that has nothing to do with everyday life. Our everyday life is only an animal existence without it. We miss all the most beautiful things that are going on in the world if we have not the eye of faith through which to behold them. Do you remember that dinner at the house of Simon the Pharisee, where Mary came with her alabaster box of costly perfume to anoint the head of Jesus? To her it was a holy, sacred deed because of her faith and her love. But Judas looked on it, and for him there was nothing dramatic or romantic or beautiful about it. It was just a waste of so much money. Now do not be shocked at Judas. His attitude was exactly the attitude of the business man of to-day who, immersed in his business life, looks on at some sentimental, self-sacrificing deed and says with sarcasm, "It may all be very fine, but it is not business." Judas simply had not the power to see in Mary's act a sacrament of life that was life indeed. As Percy Ainsworth says, commenting on Judas and his remark, it was not only that his mental arithmetic was an intruder, he was an outsider. He was heart-blind. The fact that

he prized the gift proved that he never saw it. O, these priceless things, how we miss them! How Jesus pleaded for them! Judas had been close to Christ for three years, and had heard the Master shame a king in his glory with a flower of the field, had heard the rich promises of the kingdom pledged to the poor of the earth, and yet he had not learned that there are things too beautiful to be sold. All the best things are given away. You can buy a book of poems. The soft bindings and the hand-woven paper are yours, but not the poetry. No man was ever rich enough to buy a poem. If it is to be his, he must have it as the unpurchaseable gift of God to his soul. Neither can you buy a home, or a happy hour, or a beautiful hope. All these things come by faith, and cannot be had in any other way.

You can never see the beauty or the glory of the unseen world in Jesus Christ until you come to him in humble faith. I was reading recently an account of a scientific lecture by a brilliant scientist in the institute at Manchester, England. The main achievement of the lecture was to prove that the ordinary atmosphere is full of waves of sound so delicate that they are inaudible to the ordinary ear, and they can be made audible only by a certain instrument which is the scientist's invention, which was set going during the lecture, and reproduced the sounds that ordinarily are an

inaudible music in the atmosphere by which we are surrounded—very much the same in that sphere as the photographic camera in the world of light. Now what was it that the scientific lecturer in Manchester really did? He brought into the consciousness of his audience certain musical sounds that to the ordinary unassisted mind would be unheard. My friends, that is what Jesus Christ brings to us when in the attitude of faith we live in his presence. Jesus has gathered up into his Person, that he may reproduce it for all mankind, all the inaudible music of the spiritual universe, and all that our unassisted hearts and minds would never have heard of the love of God, and never have seen of the beauty of the divine face, has been made audible and visible to us forever through the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the apostle said, "He brought life and immortality to light." The unseen universe is made visible, audible, and real in Jesus.

It is this faith that characterizes the Christian spirit in our relation toward our fellow men—faith in the childhood of every human soul to God. Without it no man can save his fellow. A bright Englishman one day paced the docks at Liverpool, and saw great quantities of dirty waste material lying in neglected heaps. He looked at the unpromising substance, and through the eye of the mind saw finished fabrics and warm and welcome garments;

and, acting on his faith, it was not long before the power of the imagination devised methods for converting the outcast stuff into refined and finished robes. A man must have that sort of spiritual eye when he looks on humanity, if he is to be a blessing to it. In one of our great cities a woman who had fallen very low, until she was counted an outcast, was redeemed and brought back to a life that was pure, and self-respecting, and noble. Afterward a friend asked her how it came about, and she told the story of how a good man, of high position and holy life, one day spoke to her in a kindly tone and manner, and with a courtesy and politeness that surprised and thrilled her cold and careless heart. Said she, "He raised his hat to me as if I were a lady!" The man had addressed her as she might be, and the buried dignity of her womanhood rose and answered to the call. O, we must have that faith in Christ and in humanity if we are to live the true Christ spirit in the world!

II

Another characteristic of the Christian spirit is obedience. The Word of God tells us that "Obedience is better than sacrifice." Nothing that we can do will please God unless we are obedient. The heathen Chinaman believes that he can cheat his god. He believes, for instance, that he can put a garment upon his child, and write in large letters

upon the back that this child has had the cholera, and that the god, seeing the letters on the child's back and concluding that the child has already had the cholera, will not give the child the cholera again. Even intelligent Chinamen believe that it is quite easy to trick a god and "take him in," consequently the whole life of China is riddled through and through with trickery and deceit.

But, my friends, we ought to be wise enough to know that we cannot trick God. No amount of ceremony or form in our religious life, no amount of pious conduct or charitable deeds, can take the place of obedience. It is only when we obey God with the loving heart and spirit of childhood that he is pleased with us. No man is truly good in God's sight unless he is obedient. Henry Drummond once said that he had traveled all the world over, and the finest thing he had ever seen was a good man. A good man! A good man is the noblest work of God, and a good man at the last analysis is simply a man who, amid all the temptations and trials of everyday life, is trying to live up to the best he knows; a man who has a loving fear of God before him, and knows no other fear. A man who must please God first will always bring into contact with his fellow men a gentle soul and a kindly heart. And we know that this is Christlike, for that was always the first question on the lips of Jesus, that his life should be pleas-

ing to the Father. When tempted in the wilderness by Satan he met every attack with the Word of God. To please the Father, by obedience to him, was the spirit of Jesus Christ.

III

Another characteristic of the Christian spirit is the constant desire to share our life with others, the persistent attempt to pass our blessings on to those who need them. Stuart Holden says he once saw written in a workingman's Bible, a man who was famous among all his acquaintances as a saint of God—written in somewhat illiterate writing—these words: "Use it or lose it." And that is true of all the blessings that come into a Christian's life. We must use them or lose them. Jesus says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." And what follows? "Out of him shall flow rivers of living water." My dear friend, we need to be careful that the channel flowing out of our lives does not become stopped up. This is true in every way, concerning everything with which we have to do. God gives us blessings to use, and if we do not use them, we either lose them entirely, or, what is often worse, they become a curse to us. We need to be careful in gathering money that the outflow does not become obstructed. Wesley's motto was, "Get all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." Wesley made a lot

of money, and might have died rich for those days, but he kept poor and died poor, and is among the immortals.

My friends, keep the outflow open, or your money will be a curse to you. Old Homer, the Greek poet, tells us the story of King Midas, who was willing to give his whole soul for golden coin. He searched far and near for gold. When he reaped a harvest he saved every yellow grain to sow for more treasures. He bought and sold, he slept and wakened, to get, crying to every servant, "Give, give." At last his very tones became metallic. He loved the dandelions because they were golden in color. He was interested in the sunset because the clouds were yellow. He twisted the very curls of his little girl's hair because the glint reminded him of coin. The miser king used his land, his servants, his people, simply to get gold. Once while he was counting his treasure a stranger touched him upon the shoulder, bringing a message that because of his hunger for wealth the gods had bestowed upon him the gift of the golden touch. The next morning King Midas's first thought on waking was, "Is the promise true?" He spread out his fingers, and, lo, the soft woolen coverlet turned to gold. Springing up he ran about the room in a transport of delight. King Midas touched the chair, and it became a golden throne; he touched his cane, and it became

a massive walking stick; he touched the dandelions, the lilac bushes and the orange trees, and all had golden boughs and petals. Thinking to surprise his little daughter, who alone was left in his house, he touched her porridge bowl, and it became a golden service. But, alas! when he lifted the water to his lips it hardened in a yellow cup. When he broke the bread the wheaten loaf became harsh metal. Then he knew that the golden touch was a curse, that starvation was before him, that the agonies of thirst would come on the morrow. In a tumult of terror and alarm he sprang toward his little daughter to gather her into his arms, and as he touched her, lo, a yellow, sickish hue advanced, as the rose retreated from the girl's cheek, while he found a dead, yellow statue enfolded in his arms. In an agony of remorse King Midas wandered all day long about his palace grounds, but wherever he went, green grass turned to yellow metal, the violets died at his approach, the very grave of the queen, at which he knelt praying and sobbing, was covered with a hard metal, through which his prayers could not pierce. The heavens above were brass, and the earth beneath was yellow gold, but as he prayed for pity and sobbed out his remorse, God sent an angel of pity and pardon. "What would you give now," asked the angel, "for a draught of cold water in a gourd? What will you give for one crust of bread? At

what price do you estimate your little child's love and her warm arms?" And King Midas sobbed out, "I will give ten thousand worlds for a crust of bread, and a cup of water, and my little child." Then the angel bade the miser remember that life is in love, in service, that the master must help his servants, the general take care of his soldiers, the mistress be tender to her maid; the measure of life is the measure of love, and truth, and pity, and kind words.

My friends, we need in the midst of this worldly, business age to ponder on these great lessons. Christ does not oppose wealth. Christ does not condemn riches, but he does hold that riches must be used for the blessing of mankind. I am always alarmed for the man who is making money and has not learned how to give it away. If God has given you gifts and talents that make it possible for you to organize business affairs with wisdom, and gather much of this world's goods, well and good; but as you value your soul, keep the outlet open. Do not wait until some future time, until you are still richer, before you tithe your money for the glory of God and the blessing of man. If there are streams flowing in, there must be also rivers flowing out.)

And it is just as true of spiritual blessings. Has God given you intelligence, and opportunities for learning, and gracious influences? Then I

say to you, you must use them or lose them. It is the man or the woman who is forever pouring forth from mind and from heart in benediction and blessing who grows nobler and sweeter with the years. One of the most beautiful and loving of Christian characters in all history was that of Father Mathew, the great Irish Catholic temperance reformer. The old man's heart was as broad as humankind. One day among the long rows that knelt in the street to receive the pledge from his hand, and to receive his blessing on their heads, there was an Orangeman, who of course had no kindly feeling for the Catholic. As Father Mathew was about to bless him, he looked up and said, "You wouldn't be blessing me if you knew what I am."

"And what are you, my dear?" (Father Mathew called everyone "My dear.")

"I am an Orangeman, your reverence."

"Why, God bless you, my dear, I wouldn't care if you were a lemon-man!"

And so the dear old man went down the line blessing and blessed.

O, what need there is for this pouring forth of the Christlike life in his own spirit of kindness!

Let us be kind;

The way is long and lonely,

And human hearts are asking for this blessing only—

That we be kind.

We cannot know the grief that men may borrow,
 We cannot see the souls storm-swept by sorrow,
 But love can shine upon the way to-day, to-morrow—
 Let us be kind.

Let us be kind;
 This is a wealth that has no measure,
 This is of heaven and earth the highest treasure—
 Let us be kind.

A tender word, a smile of love in meeting,
 A song of hope and victory to those retreating,
 A glimpse of God and brotherhood while life is fleeting—
 Let us be kind.

Let us be kind;
 Around the world the tears of time are falling,
 And for the loved and lost these human hearts are call-
 ing—
 Let us be kind.

To age and youth let gracious words be spoken,
 Upon the wheel of pain so many weary lives are broken,
 We live in vain who give no tender token—
 Let us be kind.

Let us be kind;
 The sunset tints will soon be in the west,
 Too late the flowers are laid then on the quiet breast—
 Let us be kind.

And when the angel guides have sought and found us,
 Their hands shall link the broken ties of earth that
 bound us,
 And heaven and home shall brighten all around us—
 Let us be kind.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GARMENTS OF RELIGION

Thou shalt make holy garments . . . for glory and for beauty.—*Exod.* 28. 2.

AARON, the brother of Moses, was at the head of the Hebrew priesthood. And we have here given in most interesting detail the garments which were prepared for him and for his sons, who were to be with him in the line of priests. These priests entered into the holy place of the tabernacle and offered sacrifices for the people. They alone could enter there. Perhaps it seems to you a far cry from these priests of thousands of years ago, under an old and out-worn dispensation, to a sermon which comes home to your own hearts and the conditions of your life. But I assure you that the sermon is not far away. The garments of these priests were symbolical and full of suggestion and teaching of the character necessary to every man and woman who would live worshipful and spiritual lives among men, and in the same sense in which these men were priests every Christian man or woman to-day is a priest unto God. Peter in his first epistle says: "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes,

long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious; unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." And again Peter says, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Again, in the first chapter of Revelation, John, in the beginning of his great messages to the churches in Asia, dedicates it like this: "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and father; to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever."

Every Christian is a priest unto God. It does not need a dedicated tabernacle, but as a woman goes about her work in the kitchen, or as the business man puzzles over the problems at his desk, or the farmer follows his plow through the soil, he may enter into the holy place and offer spiritual sacrifices before God, and receive blessing from heaven.

We may then apply all spiritual suggestions

from these chapters which tell of the appropriate garments for the ancient priesthood to the robe of character, the garments which belong to true religion in our own day, as well as in any other day in the history of man.

I

We have first suggested the robe of sincerity. The ephod was the principal garment of the priest. It was this that designated him as a worshiper. It practically covered the body, and was all of one piece, made of the finest material, blue in color. The color of the heavens clothed the worshiper as he went into the holy place. And so the principal garment of the Christian to-day must be a sincere, genuine, frank, open-hearted attitude toward his God and toward his fellows.

Dr. George Gordon says of all the qualities in a noble character this of sincerity is the most widely and deeply interesting. Many men who do not value as they should the qualities of gentleness and patience will respond most heartily to this grand quality of sincerity. He argues that the reason for this is that to properly appreciate the graces of gentleness and meekness and patience requires a certain degree of moral experience and spiritual cultivation, whereas anybody with the common human instincts of a man or a woman can appreciate sincerity. If you were to bring before

this audience some great singer, and ask her to sing what she considers her most perfect song, it would be appreciated, I imagine, by only a small number of us. But if afterward she were to sing some song of Tom Moore's or of Bobby Burns's, all our hearts would be touched, and appreciation and delight would be on every face. The response would be at once intense and universal. The reason would be that to appreciate the classical song requires a certain amount of musical education and development, while in the other case it requires only a mind and heart full of human sympathy. So it is with this quality of sincerity. All that is necessary to the appreciation of its worth is simply that we be a man or a woman.

Nothing can possibly please God that is not genuine and sincere. He is never deceived in us for a moment. As you step into a store window and pick up a beautiful vase and hold it up so that the light shines through it, showing at once whether there be any flaw or stain or spot, so God all the while looks through your heart and your character and knows whether or not it is true. And if we are to have standing in God's sight, there must be no evil motive. We must be clothed with the blue ephod of sincerity. And if we are to have influence with our fellow men, they too must feel in us that fine quality of sincerity which is at the base of all confidence.

II

We have also a suggestion of the music of the Christian life. On the skirts of this robe of blue, the color of the sky, there were hung bells of gold. And these bells would tinkle forth their golden music as Aaron walked among the people, and as he went to and from the tabernacle. The Christian who is to do great work for his Lord in the world must awaken the music of Christian joy. We may do this by cultivating the art of praise. The man who cultivates the habit of appreciation, and of giving thanks openly, increases his own joy and causes the music of his daily life to be heard. There is an old legend of two angels that come from heaven every morning and go forth on their errands to the world. One is the angel of prayer; the other, of thanksgiving. Each carries a great basket. Soon the angel of petition has his basket filled to overflowing. Everybody pours into it prayers by the armful. But when the day is ended the angel of thanksgiving has only here and there an expression of gratitude in his basket.

You remember the ten lepers that Jesus healed—nine of them went off rejoicing no doubt; but one came back to tinkle his golden bells in the Saviour's presence, and Jesus called attention to it and asked, "Where are the nine?" The great strength of the Christian life is to give ourselves to it with such devotion and such whole-heartedness

that it rings the joy bells. Some one writes that we will never grow to be very serious workmen in any department of life, to amount to much among men, or to reach much beauty of character, until we get the quality of praise into our heart and life. It is said that Leonardo da Vinci held a lyre in his hand while he painted. Music inspired his art. This was one of the secrets of his superb work as an artist—his heart was glad and praising. No one can do his best work with a sad heart. If you are in sorrow, another's grief will not comfort you. He who would come to you as an uplifter must have joy to bring to you. "The joy of Jehovah is your strength," said Nehemiah to his people when he found them weeping, and exhorted them to a better life. Trade your mourning veils for bells of appreciation and thanksgiving if you would do your best work in the world for God and for humanity. Some one sings:

Going up the hill, I found it long,
Until I met a merry song
That kissed mine eyes to blind me.
It mocked at me, and turned and fled,
But played on, fluttering overhead,
Till I forgot I went footsore,
And the dusty hill that rose before
Was the blue hill far behind me.

I was reading the other day of a little boy who had an accident. The doctor came and found the leg badly broken. The boy bore the setting

patiently. He set his teeth and never whimpered. The mother slipped out of the room to hide her own tears—she could not stand it as well as her boy did. Outside she heard a faint sound, and hurried back, almost hoping to find him crying.

“My boy,” she said, “do you want something? I thought I heard you call.”

“Oh, no, mother,” he said, “I did not call. I just thought I would try singing a bit.” And he went on with the song.

My friends, sew the golden bells on your robe of life, for the tinkling music of joy and of thanksgiving is the music that will keep up your own courage and the courage of your neighbors in all the struggles of your earthly experience.

III

We have also a suggestion of fruitfulness. Between every two of the golden bells on that blue robe of Aaron's there was to be worked a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe. To make sure that there should be just as many pomegranates as there were bells the writer repeats it like this: “A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about.” This would suggest to us that a man ought to do as much good as he makes music. It is a terrible thing when a Christian rings many bells, and wears no pomegranates on his robe.

The truly religious life must be fruitful as well as musical. You remember the fruit tree that Jesus cursed because it bore no fruit. It was a beautiful tree, and there were plenty of leaves, but no fruit. There can be no genuine Christian life without fruit. The music of the bells will sound hollow unless accompanied by the pomegranates of Christian deeds. Dr. Hillis makes a tree say: "My roots are strong, my boughs elastic and tough, firm against the stroke of wind and storm. Look at my bark, how smooth and fresh; and where is there a tree whose tides of sap are fuller or richer? What leaves, too, are these that I have woven out of the threads of sun and soil! Little wonder that the birds build their nests in my branches, while the cattle find shade beneath my boughs." Well, this is a good argument—for an apple tree—but a poor one for a man. The hungry farmer boy does not leap the fence on his way to the apple tree looking for sap or boughs or leaves—he is looking for apples. And God has built this world not for the root moralities only. Industry is good—it is good not to lie and not to steal and not to kill and not to perjure; but that is not enough. A man must go on from the leaf to the fruit. The fruit is truth in the inner parts, justice measured by God's standard, and mercy that tempers justice, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith that trusts, and will not be

confounded. In April the peach orchard lends a faint pink flush to the distant hillside; that stands for the moralities. In September the ripe fruit lends a golden blush of clustered food to the same hill; and that is the fruit of religion.

Among the touching incidents in connection with the Messina earthquake is the story of an old man on board a rescue ship which took refugees to Naples. In his arms he held a little girl whose face was covered with blood.

"Is that your child?" they asked him.

"No," he answered. "Yesterday I found her on the pavement in Messina. I picked her up and cared for her. No one claimed her and I could not leave her. I have had her in my arms ever since."

The love in that old man's heart as he sits there with his arms about the little stranger child is greater than the earthquake whose shock it survived. For ages God has been making mountains and volcanoes, but for ages also he has been making men, and this divine love is the flower and fruit of the noblest manhood. We must show our Christian character by our fruits.

IV

We have a suggestion of holiness, not holiness in a cold abstract, but a purity and wholesomeness of nature. Aaron was to wear upon his bosom a plate of gold, and graven upon it, like the engravings

of a signet, were to be the words, "HOLY TO THE LORD." The life of Jesus and all the teaching of the New Testament emphasize to us the fact that all our common life is to be sanctified and consecrated by our attitude toward God. What we do may be very humble and common, but it is beautified and glorified if the motive be noble and true. I like the old legend of Saint Anthony, who lived many years in the desert in fasting and prayer, until he came to think he was the holiest man on earth. But one day, while at his devotions, there seemed to speak to him a voice from heaven saying: "Anthony, deceive not thyself. Thou art not so holy as the cobbler in Alexandria." And Saint Anthony, disturbed, took his staff, trudged to Alexandria, confronted his possible rival, and said: "Declare to me your good works; your almsgiving; the great thing you are doing for God and man, for it has been revealed to me from heaven that you are holier than I."

The cobbler laughed and said: "Good deeds do I none, and great thoughts are wholly beyond me. I rise betimes in the morning and see to my family, and then I go to my work and spend the whole day getting my living. I try to teach my children to love God and man, and help my neighbors when I can. This is the sum of my holiness."

"Verily," said Saint Anthony, "I have been blind. Thou hast found the secret of eternal life."

My dear friends, we need to recall again and again to ourselves that true holiness is health, wholesomeness of nature to do the duty that is next to us with honest heart the best we can, with worship toward God and love toward men. In the Riks Museum at Amsterdam, hangs Nicolaas Maes's world-famed picture, "Old Woman Saying Grace." Rather an odd subject for a painter to choose. A worn old crone, with wrinkled skin and gray scanty locks. Were there no laughing, bright-eyed girls in all gay Amsterdam for Nicolaas Maes to draw? Yet, as we look, we can understand. The poor, worn face grows beautiful. What is the mystery? A commonplace type; we pass such in the crowded streets, hardly noticing them; gray, silent figures, trudging, bent beneath their burdens, toiling in the fields, through open cottage doorways, thin shrinking shadows of humanity. What can there be of beauty about such? And as we look all that the artist has seen comes gradually to be revealed to us; the beauty underlying—the beauty of those long years of patient labor for others, the beauty of that life of daily self-sacrifice. These mothers of the poor! The long, heroic battle for bread, not for themselves, but for the children. A long, brave fight is nearly done. She sits alone, with folded hands. The artist has painted for us the life behind. The old, worn face grows beautiful.

Robert Burns has given us the same suggestion in his poem which tells of "The Cotter's Saturday Night." He makes us look at the toil-worn cotter—mere clodhopper he was counted in those days—his back forever bent by his dull labor, an uneducated, uncultured boor. What brotherhood can your fine gentleman have with such? But the poet wraps round us his mantle of invisibility, woven of the threads of sympathy. And as we read we steal into the weather-beaten, lonely cot. It is Saturday night. The cotter sits beside his hearth, the open Bible before him, his children round him, the toil-worn laborer of the fields—he, too, is priest and king, the wise, just ruler of his people. "The rank is but the guinea stamp," to the poet only a thin disguise. And we do not wonder to hear him sing:

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in his Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

V

I must not fail to call attention to the direct announcement here that in the robe of righteous character God thinks of beauty and glory. As

has been well said, the Christian life is not a life of self-limitation and narrowness. "Jesus never told any husbandman to strip the tree of leaves, flower, and fruit; what he did say to the young husbandman was, 'Lose your self-indulgence that you may dig about the roots and make the leaves blossom. Take up that yoke called a spade and a pruning knife, that the blossoms may be beautiful and the clusters rich.' He did not ask the merchant to give up his gold, but to make his gold bright with use and with service. He did not command the youth to forswear friendship; he bade him make his friendship beautiful by service and sympathy. He did not command the jurist or scholar to disclaim the joys of wisdom and office, but he bade them use their offices and honors to promote the highest end. He did not say, give up wit and humor, but he bade men use their wit to make wrong ridiculous and their humor to pour sunshine and sweetness into all hours."

My friends, there is no character or life so beautiful as the true Christian life. It will make the life that is already beautiful to have the added glory of heaven, kissing earth's beauty with a divine radiance. To the life that is dark and gloomy, which could have no beauty at all otherwise, it can give a glory that will change its whole character.

There was a man dying in Tierra del Fuego. His name was Allen Gardener. When a ship came on that wind-swept and storm-beaten point of land they found the diary of a man, and they found his corpse. And he starved to death for the sake of the kingdom of God. And while starvation bit its dull teeth into his life, day after day he wrote in his book, "Raptures, raptures, peace, peace, peace!" And yet this case is not more wonderful to me than that of George Matheson, the blind preacher of Edinburgh. During all the days of his public life Matheson never saw a human face, and yet he was so glorified by the presence of Christ in his heart and life that life to him was infinitely beautiful and precious. He lived and died like a king. A little before he went away he was able to sing lines that reveal to us his beauty of soul:

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
 I cannot close my heart to thee;
 I trace the rainbow through the rain,
 And feel the promise is not vain
 That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
 I dare not ask to fly from thee;
 I lay in dust life's glory dead,
 And from the ground there blossoms red
 Life that shall endless be.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WORTH OF A MAN

I will make a man more precious than fine gold.—
Isa. 13. 12.

THE prophet was promising a day of terrible trouble for great Babylon, and this is the climax of a nation's sorrow. It was bad enough to have the land shorn of its harvests, and all the standing grain trampled under the feet of war horses; bad enough to have a consuming fire lay hold upon its houses; bad enough to have pride turned into shame, wealth into poverty, power into captivity. But, thus far, hope was left, for men were left. Leave a nation its men, and it will still live. Leave it men, and its enemies may do their worst; the day will pass, to-morrow they will repair the damage and begin over again. A while ago, when Germany triumphed over France under the Second Napoleon, the war damages demanded of France by the German Bismarck were such a stupendous sum that the whole world shuddered, and many wise men prophesied that France would never hold up her head again among the nations of the earth. But, astonishing as the great burden was, it was not to be compared with the world's astonishment at the rapidity and ease with which

France lifted it, and with it lifted herself to a higher place than ever among the peoples of the earth. So long as she had her men left she was rich in resources.

But the prophet says of Babylon that the day is coming when there shall be no more men. The widows and fatherless children shall search through the ruined streets, and a man shall be as rare a sight as a purse of gold. And that is the essence of our theme, and it is the essence of Christianity. The emphasis of Christianity is put upon men, not money. That is what the Master taught. Jesus Christ was interested in men, and we have our theme here in "The Worth of a Man."

I

Man in this world is in the making. We are often confused in our thinking concerning what makes a man, because all that is spiritual in man has to be developed in harmony with the body and through the body. All man's spiritual character expresses itself through the body. So long as a man is in this world, the body is as much a part of the man as is his mind and heart, and we are unable to think of them clearly as separate, though we know there is growing up a personality which is getting its education and training, but after a while may move out from the body and be clothed upon with a new body, as Paul says, "A house not

made with hands, eternal in the heavens." But here and now every noble characteristic of man, as well as everything that is mean and low, finds its expression through the body, and whether the tendencies of our human nature shall be good or evil depends altogether on the use we make of it. For we all know that our greatest vices are often but the exaggeration of our truest virtues, and a man is good or bad according to the control which masters him. Pope sings this truth when he says:

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
On savage stocks inserted, learn to bear;
The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
Wild nature's vigor working at the root.

Lust, through some certain strainers well refined,
Is gentle love, and charms all womankind;
Envy, to which the ignoble mind's a slave,
Is emulation in the learned or brave;
Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.
Thus nature gives us (let it check our pride)
The virtue nearest to our vice allied;
Reason the bias turns from good to ill,
And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.

Reginald Campbell tells how he went through the Worcester porcelain works in England. He was shown, to begin with, the hard substances which had to be ground up to form the clay; there were various qualities of clay, differing in accordance with the nature of the several ingredients composing them. Then one would see a potter at

work with a wheel, manipulating the clay; it had to be worked into numerous fantastic shapes before the actual design began to appear. Some of the clays required more of this fashioning than others, and sometimes it was hard to guess what was coming as the moist substance lay whirling and twisting on the wheel. But it was beautiful to see it emerge. It was as though the clay were revealing a soul, bodying forth an idea. Then came the burning, then the painting of beautiful designs on the vessel, and more burning; it might have to go through the fire a number of times before it was ready for the polishing. And what struck Campbell as most skillful of all, on the part of those who produced these beautiful works of art, was the fact that the colors laid on by the brush before the burning were not the same as those of the picture which afterward became part of the fabric of the vessel in the furnace. The artist had to know beforehand exactly what would happen; he had the finished picture in his mind all the while he was painting something that looked quite different. In a sense it was the clay that did the painting. It would not have been of much use to lay the same colors on wood or iron, and they varied, even as it was, with the nature of the clay on which they were imposed. In the furnace the clay absorbed them; as it were, made them part of itself, poured its own substance into them,

becoming in the end a thing of beauty through its own effect upon the little sheaths and lines of matter received from the painter's hand.

Now, the making of a man is very much like that. God is the potter and we are the clay, but he works from within instead of from without. At first the young human being seems almost entirely animal. The clay of our physical being has to take a good many fantastic shapes under the Divine Potter's hand before the soul begins to shine through. This must be what Paul means when he says, "First . . . that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." The spirit is there all the time, or there would be no body; but the body is the basis of all the higher manifestations of the spirit, just as the clay is the basis of the beautiful Worcester porcelain. We should call nothing bad because it is of the earth; we must not despise the body, for it is the temple of the living God. Then come the desires, the feelings, emotions, passions, of our nature, which can lift us up to heaven or thrust us down to hell. None of these are essentially unclean; they are the coloring laid on by the Master-artist through which the soul is asserting itself by means of our burning clay. Only God can see the finished picture, the glorious vessel that is to be, when all the burnings are over and all the desires of the flesh have been purified and made to become the perfect expression of the

indwelling spirit. Then we shall forget all the partial development in the completed whole; then all blemishes and imperfections shall disappear; then, and not till then, will the meaning of the long, slow discipline of earth become fully apparent and we shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. Browning saw this clearly when he wrote:

Let us not always say,
 "Spite of this flesh to-day
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry, "All good things
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh
 helps soul!"

All I could never be,
 All men ignored in me,
 This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher
 shaped.
 Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
 What entered into thee,
 That was, is, and shall be:
 Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay
 endure.

II

Man is worth more than his institutions or his possessions. There have been a great many people in the world who have had the idea that the chief end of man was to support certain institutions. Christ put his strong hand of disapproval on this during his ministry. Many people in that day thought that the Jewish ceremonial law was vastly

more sacred than the men who worshiped by means of it. Their ceremonies were obstructing human growth, crippling virtue, and smothering charity, but that was nothing to them so long as the technique of their ceremonies was observed; and it produced a great sensation when Christ told them that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath—that men were of infinitely more account than all their religious machinery. They called him a blasphemer and were ready to kill him, and did kill him, because he set men above rules and regulations. And our institutions to-day must ever be judged by the influence which they exert on men.

Man is worth more than anything he possesses. Jesus says: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Many people in our own day do not act as if they believed this. If we look around us and see the respect paid to wealth, even when it is joined to a personality that is but a caricature of manhood, even when the wealth has been gathered by fraud and dishonesty as the price of dishonor and shame, we shall be convinced that there are many in our day who do not believe that a man is more precious than gold. It is not the rich alone whose judgment in this matter goes astray; the poor fall into the same error. We hear a poor man saying, bitterly, that "money does not make the man,"

while his conduct shows that he really thinks that money does make the man. And we need to watch ourselves that we do not become confused in our judgment. If we are not careful, we shall often find ourselves preferring gold to manhood; laboring more diligently to enlarge our possessions than to improve ourselves. It is not true that property is of no consequence; but possessions get all their value from their relation to the man and from their power to build up men. A man's belongings are good just in proportion as they assist him in the development of his character and as he uses them to develop manhood in others.

III

Man gives value to everything else. When man loses his value, then everything else loses its value. Go to any country where man is cheap, and lands and flocks and herds and everything else are comparatively worthless. Make man high-priced, noble, splendid, and property soars in value. Not only is this so, but life is rich and valuable only as men become valuable. Life is not worth living unless it is associated with men and women whom we esteem worth while. Sympathy and fellowship and love of our kind held at high value are essential, not only to the happiness of our lives, but to our true development. Tennyson deals with this most powerfully in his poem entitled "The Palace

of Art." He tells the story of one who undertook to live life aloof from men. He sings:

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass,
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level-meadow bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily:
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion that is built for me
So royal-rich and wide."

And this lordly man for a while congratulates himself on his isolation and looks out upon the world with its struggling men and women with contempt. He sings of them with a sneer:

"O Godlike isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
 They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
 And oft some brainless devil enters in,
 And drives them to the deep."

But as time passes on, his contempt for others changes to pity, and then to terror for himself. He finds that man was not made to live alone. He finds that he is dwarfed and crippled and beggared for the lack of human sympathy and fellowship. And at last, singing of the soul as of a woman, he says:

She howled aloud, "I am on fire within.
 There comes no murmur of reply.
 What is it that will take away my sin,
 And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
 She threw her royal robes away.
 "Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
 "Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
 So lightly, beautifully built:
 Perhaps I may return with others there
 When I have purged my guilt."

Browning, too, in his story of "Paracelsus," the gifted man who degenerated into a quack, has marked it as one of the sins of that strangely complex soul, that he would be a philanthropist, but without sympathy, without dependence upon and fellowship with others. Browning makes that the secret of his failure to be truly great. In the closing scene of his life he makes him sing:

I learned my own deep error; love's undoing
Taught me the worth of love in man's estate,
And what proportion love should hold with power
In his right constitution; love preceding
Power, and with much power, always much more love;
Love still too straitened in his present means,
And earnest for new power to set love free.
I learned this, and supposed the whole was learned:
And thus, when men received with stupid wonder
My first revealings, would have worshiped me,
And I despised and loathed their proffered praise—
When with awakened eyes, they took revenge
For past credulity in casting shame
On my real knowledge, and I hated them—
It was not strange I saw no good in man,
To overbalance all the wear and waste
Of faculties, displayed in vain, but born
To prosper in some better sphere: and why?
In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill success; to sympathize, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending although weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.
All this I knew not, and I failed.

And so all men have failed of the noblest end of
life who have not counted men of more value than
things. It is by our very burdens borne for others
that our manhood grows great. Brierly, the Eng-

lish moralist, says that when we are children, we are like young colts let loose in the field. But life captures us, puts speedily the bit in our mouth, lays on, piece by piece, the baggage we are appointed to carry; piles it, until often we stagger under the load and wonder, from day to day, whence the strength will come to bear it.

A man finds himself a man of family, and that means a hundred new pressures. The going is now heavy, but it is in the tug and wrestle of it that he finds his manhood. He knows not the fight that is in him till he has to fight for others. He wonders at his early selfishness; he has half a dozen now to think of before himself! How careless was he in those first years about principles and conduct! But with these young people asking questions and wanting guidance he wakes to his responsibility. I knew a man who was prone to be profane, and he married, and after a while had a little son, a youngster toddling around. His cousin, a lady, told me that one day, being vexed about something that was unusually provoking, she turned laughingly to this man and said: "Charley, this calls for profanity. Can't you help me out?" The man looked across the room at his son and looked back at her with a strange, startled glance and shook his head. The little story is suggestive of the way the very burdens we bear for our fellows sober us and make men of us.

But a family does not exhaust a man's carrying capacity. The great spirits have all humanity on their shoulders. Think of the burdens Abraham Lincoln carried, and think what a man they made of him. As men bare their shoulders to the great loads their fellowship expands. The threads of their sympathy, spun out of their heart's fiber, stretch to the bounds of the world. With Paul they have to say: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" The secret of man's growth under these human burdens lies in the divine fellowship into which they bring him. The Titans, who bear the world on their shoulders, do it by the magic of a divine reënforcement from within. In one of the old German folk songs we read how Gunther, in his trial of strength with the terrible Brunhilda, performed his task by the aid of Siegfried, who, draped in a cloak of invisibility, unseen by the spectators, enabled his friend to hurl the stone and to poise the spear. And that is forever the secret of great souls who bless the world. Not the giants only; the feeble, the meek of the earth, have learned it. It is the secret grace of a present God, on whose infinity we cast our burdens. Life, for every one of us, however small our place, is a load too heavy to bear alone; too heavy because, for each of us, it is weighted with death and eternity. It is made so, that by the compul-

sion of our weakness we may be pressed into alliance with a power that is not our own.

IV

Man's supreme value, however, must always lie in the fact that, at the bottom, at his worst, at his lowest, man is the son of God, with the capacity for growth, and that God has not lost his interest in him, and that he may become like Jesus Christ. One must have this glance toward the future to appreciate man. If we see him only here in the dust and noise and turmoil of the struggle he may seem cheap enough; but if you look toward the future, you see the long shadow which he casts. Your point of view is everything. The mother bends over her babe with infinite hope and comfort, not at the present value of the child alone, though that is precious, but she has a vision of its possible future. She toils, endures, suffers, sacrifices for the child, because her vision of the child's future is bright with the splendor of a noble manhood, and he stands before her clad in the garments of beauty and power.

But it is not only the child watched over and loved and mothered that we may see to be precious. A little orphan waif, a stray, a street Arab, ragged, sinful, neglected, forgotten, sleeping in an ash-barrel, seems insignificant enough if you look at it simply in the present; but if you turn your

eye toward the possibilities wrapped up in this bundle of rags and wretchedness, you may find, as it has been illustrated hundreds of times in our own American history, a great bishop, or statesman, or philanthropist, who will be of supreme benediction to the world.

In the light of the future man grows great. The apostle says we know not exactly what we shall be, but this we do know, that if we give ourselves to the development of Christian life and character, after awhile we shall come to be like Jesus Christ, and when we shall see him as he is men shall see that we are like him. There, as Frederick Shannon says, is the ultimate goal of our manhood—to be like Jesus Christ, the most beautiful and glorious character in all history. This is the one thing that will satisfy mankind and justify our creation. To be like him—that will be glory enough for kings and queens, heroes and martyrs, saints and sages, men and angels! To be like him—that will excel the beauty of silver and gold, earth and sea, suns and stars! To be like him—that will turn every fear into laughter, every sob into song, every loss into gain! To be like him—that will transform sorrow into joy, defeat into triumph, death into life!

CHAPTER XX

THE TRUE FOOD OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.—*John*
6. 57.

THIS is one of the most daring and wonderful utterances of Christ. It comes in connection with Christ's journey into the wilderness with his disciples in search of rest. Multitudes of people with their sick folks and their crippled, fearing that he would leave the country, and they would fail to obtain the help which they so sorely needed, followed him to the number of many thousands. The disciples thought it was an imposition, and that the Master ought to have some opportunity for rest; but Jesus, with infinite patience and compassion, welcomed them, and gave himself to the healing of their sick and the comforting of their hearts. Afterward, when they were faint with hunger, he wrought the miracle which multiplied the little lad's loaves and fishes into abundance of food for the great crowd. It was the next day after this occasion, when the people had come to him again, that Jesus reminded them that they had come because of the miracle he wrought in regard to the bread, and he takes that for a text and preaches one of the most wonderful of all his

sermons, in which he declares that he is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, and that whosoever eateth him shall live by him. These people who listened to him at first accepted it in a very superficial way and cried out, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," just as the woman at the well of Sychar had said to him, "Give me this water, that I come not hither to draw." But when they began to think more seriously about it, they were perplexed and said one to another: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? . . . How can this man give us his flesh to eat? . . . This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" As Dr. Robertson Nicoll recently says in a great sermon on "The Power of Piety," it was a hard saying, and it is hard still. But it remains forever true that Jesus is the Bread of Life, that it is he who possesses the true and undying life. It is he who is the Bread, not his religious teachings, not his ethical precepts, but he himself. The Bread of Heaven is he. True, the Word of God is the food of the soul, but when we say that, we do not say enough. He is the Bread that is better than the manna in the wilderness, which Israel found so sweet. If you search the springs of the new nature, you find the Lord Jesus at the fount of all. If you cut into the center of the renewed heart, Christ is there.

That is, there is a living and a spiritual unity between Christ and the redeemed soul, and it is according as that unity is maintained that the spirit flags or grows strong. We eat Christ and live by him when we live in the faith and love which brings his presence to us, that causes us to cleave to him with a fond affection, so that we constantly desire communion with him. Paul gives utterance to it when he says: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings."

I am sure it cannot help but strengthen and comfort our hearts to consider for a little some of the great features of our Christian lives which depend absolutely for their food on Jesus Christ.

I

Christ is the food which alone can sustain *our personal righteousness of character*. Lord Hugh Cecil, the son of the famous Lord Salisbury, recent premier of Great Britain, speaking before the

Christian Evidence Society, in England, awhile ago, raised a very interesting question. He declared that the great danger that threatens us is not that people regard Christ as untrue, but that they are coming to regard him as unnecessary. The conquests of medical science over pain, and of social reform over bad conditions of living, are helping to lessen belief in sin, and, consequently, belief in the need of a Divine Redeemer. This is an element in the present religious situation which needs to be carefully considered. It is a form of materialism, since its outlook is limited to things which can be seen and handled, and it is a very subtle form, since it assumes to be allied with progress. Much of our modern social preaching aids this feeling that Christ is unnecessary. When he is proclaimed first and foremost as Reformer there will be little hungering after him as Redeemer, men being so easily contented with surface reformation. The sense of sin and of need is not produced by the proclamation of a Christ who establishes a material kingdom. They alone cry, "I am a sinful man, O Lord," who, like Peter, come into contact with his awful holiness. There is in all this an insidious and terrible danger. Nothing can ever take the place of Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer of the sinner.

A lady had a plant, a very beautiful fern. She set it in the very best possible place in the house

and attended it with the greatest care. She thought she was doing the best she could with it, but after awhile it withered, and though she renewed her diligence, it withered more and more. A florist came to visit her, a specialist in this line. Being very anxious about this plant, she asked him what was the matter with it. He looked at it closely, and without saying a single word he thrust his hand into the earth around the root of the fern and when he drew it out he said, "I thought so."

She did not know what he meant. There was a little black spot on his finger.

"That," said the florist, "is a snail. These snails are very fond of this particular kind of fern, and it takes only one snail at the heart of the fern to kill it."

So, my dear friends, it takes only one snail of sin at the heart of a man or a woman to destroy the spiritual life and the beauty and glory of the character, and there is only one Florist who is able to kill the snail of sin, and transform into beauty the delicate but glorious plant of righteousness in the human soul, and he is Jesus Christ.

This sublime truth, that we must all depend for our spiritual food to sustain our personal righteousness on Christ alone, puts us all on a par, and makes it impossible for any one of us to excuse himself from the purest and holiest

living. Many people are ready to excuse themselves from saintly living because of what they declare are the limitations of their spiritual natures. A man says: "My nature is what it is; it has its limitations, its incapacities, its inherent biases; it cannot but be hasty, sensual, crooked, slothful, or whatever it may be; I can only resign myself to it, and God must take me as I am. I cannot by any effort add a cubit to my moral stature; it is as idle to ask me to be a saint like Paul or John as to be a poet like Shakespeare or a musician like Beethoven." The fallacy in this lies in a misapprehension of what is our nature. What we call our nature, that which has so much evil in it, is not nature as God gave it to us, but a nature which has been produced by sin. It is not God's will for us at all. God's will is with us only when we resist what is evil in our present nature, and in the help and spirit of Jesus Christ rise above it. Not in your own strength, but in the strength that comes from feeding upon Christ, may you rise into beauty and strength and glory of character beyond all your present dreams.

II

Christ is the food upon which alone we may find power to win and to bless others. Great revivals of true religion, marvelous upheavals for righteousness which have turned multitudes of

people away from sensual and wicked living and aroused in them the spirit of devotion and worship toward God and kindness and brotherhood toward their fellow men, have always been brought about by men and women who fed upon Jesus Christ. They have been all sorts and conditions of men, from Paul all the way down the centuries to General Booth and Gipsy Smith, some learned, and some ignorant of the world's wisdom, some of great natural intelligence and others handicapped by many limitations in intellectual capability; but one thing has been notable about every one of them, and that is that the supreme food on which he fed his soul was Jesus Christ.

Dr. W. J. Dawson, in one of his recent sermons, draws a very beautiful picture of Francis of Assisi. Francis was the son of a rich man, never a priest, never ordained, just a plain layman. You will please notice that. He goes into the woods. His heart is troubled for his social duties and what he ought to do for poor folks, and in this woods, in a little chapel, he hears the call of Christ. He renounces his wealth, and when his father renounces him in turn, Francis says, "I must go to my heavenly Father, for I have no other father left." He goes out into the highway to find the kind of work that Christ would have done, and in those days there were lepers in the land, many lepers. Francis went first of all

to them, and his pity overcame his repulsion, and he beautifully called them "God's patients." He built for them hospitals, and he washed their sores, he nursed them, he lived with them, and he toiled for them, until people began to say a new Christ had sprung up, and it was a true saying. John of Bologna tells us that in the year of 1212 he heard that Francis was to speak at Bologna, and went to hear him. He expected from so famous a man great oratory, and when he got there he found that Francis spoke quite quietly and colloquially. But when Francis had finished that conversational address, which astonished John of Bologna by its simplicity and plainness, John says the crowd were all weeping, and men who had hated each other until they were ready to shed each other's blood, fell upon each other's necks and forgave past enmities, and as Francis passed out of that little place that afternoon thousands of people knelt down to kiss the very hem of his frayed brown robe as he went by. Christ was born again. There was a man who lived as a Christ among his brethren. Francis became a great reviver of the church, and here, after all these centuries, we feel the thrill and the heart-throb of the uplift of the life of Francis. The secret of it all was that he fed upon Jesus Christ so completely that his life became vital with the spirit of Jesus. The supreme need of our own time and

of our city is that not only the preachers but the laymen shall so feed upon Jesus that our individual personal lives, lived for the most part in humble and secular places, shall be throbbing and thrilling with the spiritual vitality of Jesus, so that homes, and stores, and offices, and manufacturing places, all through the city, shall be honey-combed with the heavenly vitality imparted by true-hearted men and women who daily feed upon Jesus Christ as the Bread from Heaven.

III

Jesus Christ is the only food which gives abiding peace and comfort to the soul. After all, the great search of the world is after peace and comfort. Men slave for money, and crawl on their knees to get power, because they imagine that, somehow, in these ways they will find the still greater prizes, peace and comfort. But the peace which the world can give is a very poor affair at best. Alexander Maclaren puts it well when he says that it is a shallow, thin plating over a depth of restlessness, like some skin turf on a volcano, where a foot below the surface sulphurous fumes roll and hellish turbulence seethes. The world has no true peace to sell. Go back through all the history of mankind and you will find that men have tried it in its pleasures, politics, commerce, literature, and science. They have sought in all

these and found it not. We know both by the confessions of the dead and of the living that neither money, culture, place, nor power can bring peace to the soul.

Peace must spring from underneath, from within. It must come from roots that are fed far away out of sight. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in one of the last and happiest parables he ever wrote, tells us the true nature of a tree. He tells us that these great fluttering masses of leaves, stems, boughs, trunks are not real trees. The real tree lives under ground, and what we see is nothing more or less than its tail. Holmes says the tree is an underground creature with its tail in the air. All its intelligence is in its roots; all the sense it has is in its roots. Think what sagacity it shows in its search after food and drink! Somehow or other the rootlets, which are its tentacles, find out that there is a brook at a moderate distance from the trunk of the tree, and they make for it with all their might. They find every crag in the rocks where there are a few grains of the nourishing substance they care for, and insinuate themselves into its deepest recesses. When spring and summer come they let their tails grow and delight in whisking them about in the wind, or letting them be whisked about by it; for these tails are poor, passive things with very little will of their own, and bend in whatever direction the

wind chooses to make them. All the gorgeous expanse of plumage, all the beauty and glory of the tree, as we see it, depends entirely upon the food which the roots find hidden away out of sight.

The Christian life is like that. You see a life like Paul's, or like John's, which is never disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Outside there is only abuse and hardship and imprisonment and cruel persecution. How is such a life of faith and love and fragrant spirituality grown in such an atmosphere? But when you question them you find that, like the tree, the real life of these great and wonderful men is "hid with Christ in God." They feed upon Jesus, and their hearts are comforted, and they have the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Dear friends, this is the open secret of the Christian life. There is no such peace as Christ can give. Neither does it take a great man nor a genius to find the way to it.

S. D. Gordon was riding on horseback in one of the Southern States when he came on an old log cabin, almost fallen in pieces, and in the doorway an old black mammy was standing. Her back was bent nearly double with the years of hard work, her face deeply wrinkled, and her crinkly wool as white as snow, but her eyes were as bright as two stars out of the dark blue. He called out, cheerily: "Good morning, auntie. Living here all alone?"

She looked up with her eyes brighter yet with the thought in her heart, and in a shrill, high-keyed voice said, "Jes' me'n Jesus, massa."

A hush came over the place. There seemed a halo about the old broken-down cabin, and the traveler thought he could see Somebody standing by her side looking over her shoulder at him, and his form was like that of the Son of God. The poet had the same thought as the old black woman when he sang:

I cannot do it alone,
 The waves run fast and high,
 And the fogs close chill around,
 And the light goes out in the sky;
 But I know that we two
 Shall win in the end—
 Jesus and I.

I cannot row it myself,
 My boat on the raging sea;
 But beside me sits Another
 Who pulls or steers with me,
 And I know that we two
 Shall come safe into port—
 His child and he.

Coward and wayward and weak,
 I change with the changing sky.
 To-day so eager and brave,
 To-morrow not caring to try;
 But he never gives in,
 So we two shall win—
 Jesus and I.

Strong and tender and true,
Crucified once for me!
Never will he change, I know,
Whatever I may be!
But all he says I must do,
Ever from sin to keep free.
We shall finish our course
And reach home at last—
His child and he.

CHAPTER XXI

THE KINSMEN OF JESUS CHRIST

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.—*Matt. 12. 50 (Am. Rev. Ver.)*.

CHRIST was in the midst of one of his great sermons, a sermon in parables. Even while he spoke, and the great crowd listened, full of attentive interest, one came to him and told him that his immediate family, consisting of his mother and his brothers, were waiting outside the crowd for speech with him, and Christ, full of the great thoughts which he had been illustrating in parables to the listening multitudes, supremely conscious of the spiritual realities of the higher kinship of souls, replied to the messenger by saying, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" And then he turned from the man who had brought him the word, and looked out over the crowd, stretching his hand forth to his audience, and especially toward his disciples, who had been following him and learning something of his spirit until their hearts were growing into a oneness with his, and said: "Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."

I

The strongest note in the Bible is the cry of the heart of God, offering love to us and asking for our love in return. Lyman Abbott truly says that if we will turn to the Old Testament, we will see how God calls sometimes for service, and sometimes for soldiers, but most of all for lovers. The cry of the old Bible is the cry of the heart of the Father aching for the heart of his child. And when we come into the New Testament it throbs and sometimes sobs with this same great cry. When Christ stood by the Sea of Galilee on that summer morning with Peter and asked him again and again, "Simon, son of Jonah, dost thou love me?" it was not as an inquisitor putting a sinner on the rack for wickedness performed; it was a hungry heart asking a friend and rejoicing in the response, "Yes, I do love you," and wanting something better than Peter's answer, "I am your friend," and asking again and yet again that he might get from Peter the word that Peter had not the courage to utter, "I love you—I love you."

A while ago in Canada, when they had very severe weather, and the cold was so extreme that there was much suffering in the great towns, and in some of the larger cities, the municipal authorities had huge fires built in the streets, that the poor people might gather around them and enjoy the genial warmth and have the frost taken out of

their freezing limbs. What a picture that is of what happened to the world when Jesus Christ came forth from the loving heart of God and moved amid the streets of mankind! He was like a great fire of kindness and love, around which the multitude gathered for cheer and warmth. And ever since men have been gathering about that fire, drawing near to that heavenly flame, and frozen human nature has been thawing into brotherhood and fellowship. What is our missionary work in heathen lands but the building of great hearth-fires to thaw out frozen humanity with the warmth that comes in the revelation of God in Christ Jesus?

II

Christ declares the one condition of kinship to him to be obedience to God. If we yield ourselves to do the will of the Father, then we become the kinsmen of Jesus Christ. The spiritual kinship supersedes the physical, and it always hinges on obedience to God. No mere culture, however brilliant, can take the place of genuine, sincere obedience to the will of our heavenly Father.

Dr. Hillis points out, in one of his sermons, that there is a culture that stops short of obedience and of the surrender of the will to the laws of God, just as there are trees that blossom, but fall short of bringing forth fruit. History is full of ex-

amples of scholars in whom conscience was lifeless. Solomon was the wisest man of his day, but also the wickedest. Alcibiades was the most brilliant pupil of Socrates, but he was also a scoundrel and a traitor. Lorenzo de Medici was a poet, an orator, a soldier, a man of letters, the most cultured man of his time; he also told lies, poisoned his enemies, murdered his friends, and finally destroyed the liberty of his country. He wore his intellectual culture over a corrupt heart, as Naaman wore a purple robe over a leprous body. Moral culture, like intellectual culture, may be only skin-deep, just as the traveler climbing Vesuvius through beautiful orchards and gardens is told by the guide that the soil is only spade-deep. All about him are vineyards and fig orchards and rich blossoms and springs of water, but all the while there is an undertone of rumbling, and here and there is a crack that emits hot steam, and near by is a boiling spring. The traveler climbing upward is always conscious that beneath his feet lies a lake of fire that at any moment may break out, to bury some town or vineyard. And as he looks back across the uncovered ruin of Pompeii he remembers how the once live and beautiful city, rich in wealth and all the signs of outer culture, but steeped in hidden vices, was overwhelmed by the seething revolt of this same Vesuvius. Cultivated habits of piety may

be equally as superficial. Our knowledge of Christ and of God must be transmuted into obedience to the will of God before we become the kinsmen of Jesus Christ.

We are not the kinsmen of Jesus because we know much of the Bible, because we have been trained in ecclesiastical forms, or because we have been so hedged about by the habits and customs of Christian civilization that we travel in their grooves as a traveler across the prairie takes the same rut along which other travelers have driven. We may have all these evidences of Christianity and yet have no spiritual kinship with Jesus Christ. Some of you who have read those old novels of Sir Walter Scott will recall Old Mortality. How he was to be found on lonely moors in Scotland, seeking the neglected graves of the Covenanters, rubbing the moss from the tombstones, and with chisel and mallet reinscribing their names—a quaint, pious task. But when it was done, Old Mortality had not made the bones stir beneath the sod, and he had not brought back the spirit of Scotland's heroes to their native land. It is possible for us in the most careful and scholarly and critical way to study the story of Jesus Christ in our Sunday schools and in our Bible classes, and yet be doing nothing more than reinscribing the legend of a dead Christ. If we are to be the kinsmen of Jesus, we must meet with

him shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart in doing the will of God.

The kinsman of Jesus Christ must make obedience to God the supreme passion of his life. Henry van Dyke, in the preface to his book entitled "The Ruling Passion," says that in every life there is a ruling passion, the very pulse of the imagination. Unless you touch that, you are groping around outside of reality. Music, nature, children, honor, strife, revenge, money, pride, friendship, loyalty, duty—to these objects and to others like them the secret power of personal passion often turns, and the life unconsciously follows it as the tides in the sea follow the moon in the sky. Now, if you study the life of Jesus Christ, you will find that the ruling passion is to do the will of God. When he had fed his hungry body at the well of Sychar by bringing a poor, sinful woman not only to know her sins but to catch a glimpse of the possibilities of forgiveness of sin and salvation, he said to his disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not." And when they wondered about it, he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." There, O my friends, is where we shall enter into the royal family of Jesus Christ, when doing the will of God, pleasing our heavenly Father, becomes our very meat and drink and is indeed the ruling passion by which we live.

III

When we thus enter into this genuine kinship with Jesus Christ, both we ourselves and our work are exalted and glorified. The man who really enters into that consciousness that he is the spiritual brother of Jesus Christ, cannot feel meanly about his own nature. He is the child of a King. He bears the likeness of God. He is conscious that in his heart and spirit there throb the same spirit and life as beat in the breast of Jesus of Nazareth when he went about doing good. It does not make us conceited, because it is not our life, but it is Christ Jesus that liveth in us, and our work is at once glorified because of the fellowship in which we labor.

A lady was once standing in front of that splendid Cathedral at Cologne when she heard some one behind her say, "Didn't we do a fine piece of work here?" Turning, she saw a man in the plainest working-clothes, and said to him, "Pray, what did you do about it?"

"I mixed the mortar across the street for two years," was the cheerful reply.

God's work to-day needs cheerful, patient, and diligent mortar-mixers. Mixing mortar is no doubt one of the hardest and most disagreeable things to do in rearing a building. But what sort of a building could be made without mortar? Then a man should thank God and take courage if

his lot is cast among the mortar-mixers. It was something like this that the sacred writer had in his mind when he wrote, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men." When we work in fellowship with Christ and are conscious that we are his spiritual kinsmen, the scars we win are marks of honor. Dr. Hallock tells of a man whom he knew who was so crippled that he could walk only with unsteady steps. There was upon his face a look as if he were in constant pain and weakness, and his features were disfigured also with scars. But these blights and scars were for him the insignia of the noblest honor. He had been a soldier fighting for his country's flag. In a gallant charge he had greatly distinguished himself; but he received wounds from which he never recovered. He never knew a well day again. He must henceforth bear the marks of that heroism. Yet he was not ashamed, but proud of them. He knew they were brands of honor. He could well have said, in the very spirit of our theme, "Henceforth let no man trouble me, or question my loyalty to duty, for I bear in my body the ineffaceable marks of my patriotism." Paul was a much-scarred man. He had had trouble on every side and of almost every kind. But all of it had come to him as a kinsman of Jesus Christ, doing the will of God. Hence he was able to cry, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my

body the marks of the Lord Jesus." God give us such marks! If we must be branded by toil and service, let it not be as mere money-getters, as mere pleasure-seekers, as mere runners after applause; but let us be branded as the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ in the burdens we bear for humanity and in the consolation we bring to the weak and the sorrowing.

IV

If we become in deed and in truth Christ's kinsmen, we come into his attitude toward humanity. We see men and women with Christ's eyes, and we see in them what others do not see. Dawson, the English evangelist, says that when, many years ago, the life of Livingstone was published, he was greatly impressed by a certain incident Livingstone described—of a poor African woman lying by the roadside afflicted with a peculiarly repulsive disease. The picture was so vivid that it made him shudder, for he was at that period of youth which is extremely sensitive to pain. All sorts of painful sights he shrank from, and he wondered how Livingstone could bring himself even to touch that dreadful woman by the roadside. But he read on, and as he read he came across words of such passionate tenderness that before he had finished the description he understood how it was that Livingstone could touch that

poor, repulsive woman with her dreadful disease. He saw in her a creature for whom Christ died. He saw in her a fragment of God himself. He recognized the soul, dumb, confused, ignorant, unlearned, still an immortal soul to which, in value, all the gold of Ophir and all the diamond fields of South Africa were as the dust in the balance. Surely it was that conviction of the divinity in man, and that alone, which could have nerved Livingstone for his life of solitary toil among savage races who seemed scarcely human. It was possible because he was a kinsman of Jesus. And, my friends, it will not be possible for us to do our duty in saving the men and women about us unless we have this same attitude toward humanity and for the same reason. Miracles would be wrought in our own church and in our city if we could bring ourselves with supreme devotion into this sympathetic relation with our fellow men.

Dr. Broughton, of Atlanta, tells of a minister who called his elders together and, because there were no souls being saved, tendered his resignation of the pastorate. One of them urged him not to take that course, because the people were being edified. The minister asked, "Edified for what?" and added: "Brother, do you believe that through you a soul was ever saved?"

"No," was the frank reply.

The same question was put to each one present, and the same reply was given. At the minister's request, they all agreed to resign office with him if there were no conversions in the immediate future. What was the result? The next day the official first addressed spoke to his confidential clerk. "Bob," said he, "you are not a Christian, and I, who am an elder of the church which you attend, when you attend anywhere, have never spoken to you about your soul. But, Bob, I am in earnest now, and I want us to kneel down here and give ourselves to Christ, I for fuller consecration and you for salvation." The clerk was touched by God's Spirit through his employer's earnestness, and found Christ. And that business man, who had never before led a soul to Jesus, was instrumental in the conversion of ten other men the same day; and he and his brother elders won thirty men to Christ that week!

V

In kinship with Jesus Christ we shall find the supreme courage and the supreme joy of living. The highest life can be lived only in the inspiration which comes from fellowship with the divinest Being who ever wore our human flesh. An English naval officer tells a grateful story of the way he was helped and saved from dishonor in his first experience in battle. He was a mid-

shipman, fourteen years old. The volleys of the enemy's musketry so terrified him that he almost fainted. The officer over him saw his condition, and came close beside him, keeping his own face toward the enemy, and held the midshipman's hand, saying in a calm, quiet, affectionate way: "Courage, my boy! you will recover in a minute or two. I was just so when I went into my first battle." The young man said afterward that it was as if an angel had come to him and put new strength into him. The whole burden of his agony was gone, and from that moment he was as brave as the oldest of the men. If the officer had dealt sternly with the boy, he might have driven him into cowardly failure. His kindly sympathy with him dispelled all fear, put courage into his heart, and made him brave for battle. But that is a faint image of what Jesus Christ is to men and women who are weak and ready to faint in the battle of life. He is not only touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but he is patient with our weaknesses, and comes to us again and again with his assuring word, "Be of good courage, for I have overcome the world."

Read again the story of Saint Paul. See again the man who listened to the sobs and groans of human misery, and took them upon his heart, and wore out that most magnificent nature in the service of men who had no claim on him, and

you will see him always rejoicing, always full of good cheer. It is a law as solid as the universe that if a man undertakes to fence out of his heart the sorrows of the world, misery will flow unbidden, and, in spite of every break-water that he can throw up, through his whole being. Jesus uttered the great law when he said, "Whoso loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." And any man or woman of you who ever lost yourself for days or weeks or years for a great cause, will bear me testimony that when you forgot yourself in some one else's suffering in those experiences your life grew deeper and richer and fuller.

My friends, let us give ourselves as never before to be the brother, the sister, the mother of Jesus Christ. Let us enter with all our heart's love into kinship with him in serving our brothers and sisters and in curing the heartache of the world. Then we shall know the joy which Christ knew, that made it possible for him, in spite of the cross which loomed before his eyes, to go forward with infinite peace. We shall then know that the poet was true when he sang:

Love much. There is no waste in freely giving;
More blessed is it, even, than to receive.
He who loves much alone finds life worth living:
Love on, through doubt and darkness; and believe
There is nothing which Love may not achieve.

CHAPTER XXII

WHERE THE SHADOWS ARE WHITE

In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me.—*Isa.*
49. 2.

(SOME years ago a little company of American artists were living on the Island of Ischia in the beautiful Bay of Naples. It was a winter paradise and they reveled in its glorious skies, rare visions of the sea, and abundance of fruits and flowers. One of these artists, a young lady, telling the story of their winter, says that from the beginning of their coming to the island they had heard perpetually of a mysterious personage known as "Madame Teresa." Everyone they met was sure, sooner or later, to speak of her. From visitors, peasants, poor people, beggars, servants, the priests, and the doctors, in all parts of the island, they were always hearing of "Madame Teresa." The poor people called her "Madonna," with almost as much reverence as if they were speaking of the real one. No one at the great hotel where they were stopping seemed to have met her, and the young ladies wondered why they did not meet her, why they never saw her on the street, or taking long walks over the mountains, or on horseback. They had never known of a person of

whom one heard so much and yet of whom nobody ever gave you any definite facts.

One day one of the ladies was off with a party on an exploration, and when she came back she said she had called on Madame Teresa.

"What does she look like?" asked the other lady.

Her friend was in a teasing mood, and would answer her nothing, but promised, if the next day were pleasant, she would take her there to see for herself; and so on the morrow they went to make the call. They paused before an old house which stood entirely surrounded by trees and shrubbery. The door was soon opened by a cheery-faced woman in a white peasant's cap. At the foot of the stairs they met two peasant boys whom they recognized, and when they stopped to speak with them, the boys said they had been to see Madame Teresa to have a quarrel settled, and now were departing amicably. They followed the servant up the staircase to an upper hall, which seemed to be a sort of inner garden, with vines trained over the walls, and birds hanging in cages, singing merrily, and plants and flowers everywhere. Here a door to the left was opened and they passed into a large, bright room, its frescoed ceiling painted like the sky, with feathery clouds upon its surface, and the floor covered with luxurious rugs. No one advanced to meet them, but as they

stepped forward they saw on a couch by one of the windows, resting on soft red cushions, a little shrunken figure, partially covered with an afghan, with withered white hands folded patiently together—the Madame Teresa of whom the young lady had heard so much. Then she knew why they had never met her in the streets, or on their walks, why the rough peasant boys spoke of her with a touch of tenderness in their voices: because her life was enshrouded by the mystery of pain. She was introduced by her friend, and, suddenly, as Madame Teresa smiled her greeting, the room seemed full of soft and subdued sunlight. Madame Teresa had been shut in within those four walls for thirty years, knowing hardly a moment's freedom from pain. But Madame in those years had brought the outside world in unto her, and to her feet, until she had become an unseen power on the island, and wielded as strong an influence in her way as any sceptered queen on royal throne. It was a refining influence in itself to be allowed to remain in such a room for any length of time. True, the room was full of birds and flowers, of beautiful faces looking down from old Florentine frames on the wall, of strong colors lighting corners which might otherwise have been dark; but the chief center of attraction was Madame Teresa herself. She was a part of the brightness of the charming room, a part of its delicate refine-

ment, of its color and light. After you had talked with her awhile it could be with no feeling of pity that you looked down into that thin, white face to meet the straightforward glance of her expressive eyes, now gleaming with enthusiasm while she talked quickly in a low voice which had something in it of the musical echo of far-off bells; now with eyelids half drooped over her eyes, which had a patient, brave expression in them that told the story of pain conquered and nerves heroically controlled.

Madame Teresa thanked the young artist for coming to see her, told her many facts about the island, and quaint legends and funny stories about the people; and finally, pointing out through the window, said: "Here I lie, day after day, and look out yonder where the trees make a green archway against the sky. I call it the 'Gate Beautiful,' and my eyes, the only things I possess which can travel, can go no farther; so I lie before it every day, wondering a little sometimes of what lies beyond."

As the young lady turned away from the window her eyes caught sight of something which gave her, she thought, the keynote to Madame Teresa's brightness, for hanging where her eyes could at all times rest upon it, was a picture of Christ as the light of the world, and painted below in old English lettering the inscription:

In Thy Light may we see Thee,
 The true Light.
 With Thy Love, love Thee.
 Let there be but one will between us,
 And that Thy Will,
 And one heart between us,
 And that Thine own.

As they were about to take their departure they asked Madame Teresa if they should not tell her maid to bring in the lights, so they should not leave her alone in the dark, but Madame laughed and said she was never alone. "It is always noon with me. When shadows come, and I do not like them, I always think of bright lights," she added, with her wonderful smile, and, suddenly, spite of the twilight, the room again seemed full of light.

On their walk home the young lady, who tells the story, was asked by her friend what she thought of Madame Teresa. Her answer was: "A little white shadow. Do you remember what you said the other day as we came through the vineyards at noontide, and looked down at the town and bay, how 'even the shadows themselves are white at this hour of the day'? This afternoon that came back to me with such strange force in connection with Madame Teresa, as she said just before we left, that it was always noon with her."

I have told you this beautiful story in so much detail because in it there is illustrated and enforced

any sermon which might be preached on our theme. Our text assures us that it is possible for every one of us to live in that atmosphere where all the shadows of life grow white. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," and if we are hidden in the shadow of his hand, we know that the shadow which covers us is white.)

I

Even the shadow of guilt becomes white when we are hidden in God's hand. God says through Isaiah: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Many of you have looked upon that angry cloud with its crimson and scarlet lines that seemed about to send forth their lightnings in punishment, but when in penitence you crept under the shadow of God's hand through faith in Jesus Christ, and looked back upon the cloud, all the threatening colors that seemed so full of doom, and aroused in your heart such apprehension of judgment to come, had vanished away, and instead of threat and anger and premonitions of punishment the cloud was illuminated, and across it there was the span of the rainbow of mercy and love, the promise of protection and guidance. And there is not a man or a woman here this morning whose cloud

of guilt is so dark and angry but what you may, through the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, slip into the shadow of God's hand and find all the shadow of guilt turned white with love.

II

Then there is the shadow of doubt, a dark and cruel shadow to many hearts; but that will grow white if we live under the white shadow of God's hand. Jude's plan of escape from doubt was, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jesus said, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God." That is, if we keep close to God, under the shadow of his hand guiding us, we shall not doubt the path. We shall see clearly. If we keep ourselves day by day in the love of God, through obedience, there will be no doubt. Doubt is born of separation and lack of love. I was reading a cynical writer not long ago, who said that every marriage was one-sided, that there was always one who loved and one who was loved. Of course, if his words were true, there could be no abiding happiness in wedded life. Disillusion would come sooner or later. As soon as it was discovered that the love was one-sided—all the giving on one side, all the receiving on the other—the charm

would be broken and the union of hearts would be at an end.

But the love story of God and the human heart is too often a one-sided story. The failure is never on God's part. "He that spared not his own Son, but, delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" All failure of perfect peace and confidence lies in the half-hearted response, the imperfect surrender on our part, and not in any failure on God's part.

III

The shadow of fear also loses its darkness and its threat and grows white when we live in the shadow of God's hand. You remember the story in the Acts of the Apostles which tells of Paul's sea voyage, when on his way to Rome as a prisoner on the Alexandrian corn ship they were caught in a fierce winter storm, and for days and nights all on board had lost hope save Paul. And one morning he stood out before them, the captain, the sailors and the soldiers, and with a bright, buoyant face said to them: "I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs,

be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." My friends, your fears shall vanish away, and your faces grow bright and buoyant, and your hearts be full of courage for the daily struggles of life, if you keep yourselves in the shadow of God's hand as did Paul.

(John says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." That makes the escape from fear very simple. If we live day by day in loving fellowship with Jesus Christ our Saviour, we shall have no fear. If we are close to Christ in our thoughts and deeds, then the fragrance of his love banishes fear. Campbell Morgan says that he once went into the home of a gentleman who was entertaining him, and in one room he always detected the fragrance of roses, and he said to his host one day, "I wish you would tell me how it is that I never come into this room without seeming to detect the fragrance of roses."

The gentleman smiled and said: "Ten years ago I was in the Holy Land, and while there I bought a small phial of attar of roses. It was wrapped in cotton wool, and as I was standing here unpacking it, suddenly I broke the bottle. I took the whole thing up, cotton wool and all, and put it into this vase." There stood a beautiful vase, and he lifted the lid, and the fragrance of roses

filled the room. That fragrance had permeated the clay of the vase, and it was impossible to enter the room without consciousness of it. My friends, if Christ be in us, the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon will pervade and permeate our whole life. All that kind of fear that hath torment will disappear, and the love which beautifies and glorifies human living shall possess us, and make us a comfort and a blessing to all whose lives touch our own.)

IV

The shadow of sorrow will whiten in the presence of God's hand. Jesus said to his disciples that sorrow was a necessary part of human life, but it did not have to stay dark. He said to them, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Though we must needs have sorrows from time to time, we may have peace in Jesus under the shadow of God's hand. (Sorrow is often more beneficial to us than pleasure. A gentleman was one night walking, with his little niece, down the street of a city which for some distance was brightly illuminated with small colored lights among the shade trees. The little girl was delighted with the brilliant scene, but presently, looking up into the sky, she exclaimed, "Uncle, I cannot see the stars." And so it is often true that continued experience of the pleasures of life so dazzles our eyes that we

cannot see the lights of heaven above our head. But the blackness, the bitterness, of sorrow disappears if we keep close to God. It is always a heartening thing to follow the story of Paul. What sorrows he had! And yet his shadows of sorrow always were white. When he was put into prison after being beaten, his praise to God converted the jailer; when he had an evil disease, that was like a thorn in the flesh, he could thank God that it only brought out the better the grace of God; when they sent him to Rome, a prisoner, he rejoiced and said, "This is that I may be a missionary to Cæsar's household." If Paul ever murmured, and no doubt he did sometimes, he was so close to God, under the shadow of his hand, that he murmured into the ear of his Father.

("Ian Maclaren" once said that if any man has a quarrel with God, let him have the quarrel out, but not upon the street or with strangers—let him have it out with God. They say the safest place on a battleship, when the guns are firing, is behind them, and the best place when the will of God has brought sorrow to you is close to God's heart. It is there that the shadows will grow white, and the peace of God will come upon us. Remember that it is in God's hand, and not in ours, where our sorrows must lose their bitterness and their blackness. How oft would relief come to our sorrowing hearts if we would only pause to consider that it

is not our hand that will save, not our foresight that will prevent a calamity, and not our power that will uphold us in the hour of stress. No, it is in God's hand that we may rest in peace.) Frederick Shannon beautifully voices this sweet confidence:

To-night, my soul, be still and sleep;
The storms are raging on God's deep—
God's deep, not thine; be still and sleep.

To-night, my soul, be still and sleep;
God's hands shall still the tempest's sweep—
God's hands, not thine; be still and sleep.

To-night, my soul, be still and sleep;
God's love is strong while night hours creep—
God's love, not thine; be still and sleep.

To-night, my soul, be still and sleep;
God's heaven will comfort those who weep—
God's heaven, and thine; be still and sleep.

V

Even the shadow of death loses all its terrors when we are close to God. How confidently David sings in his Shepherd Psalm, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

No man who has seen as much of the shadow of death as I have will ever make light of it. It is indeed a dark shadow. It fell over my house

one day, and a noble boy, my firstborn son, the light and the gladness of the household, faded out of our sight. And though more than twenty years have passed since I stood under that shadow, a hundred times a year, when I am alone, my heart grows tender and my eyes fill with tears in memory of that day. But, thank God, the blackness of the shadow has long since passed away. The shadow has grown white, for now I feel and know that though out of my earthly presence that sweet song bird has flown, and sings there no more, still it sits in the Tree of Life and sings, and I shall hear it again.

I know that many of you know what the shadow of death means, but I say to all of you who are under the shadow that seems dark, Keep close to God and the darkness shall have illumination. Heaven is not far away to those who are hid in the shadow of God's hand, and immortality is sure to those who live the higher life of love and faith amid earth's shadows.

So in the midst of all the shadows that life or death can bring to us, if we maintain our confidence in God, we may sing:

In the center of the circle
 Of the will of God I stand;
 Where can come no second causes;
 All must come from his dear hand.
 All is well! for 'tis my Father
 Who my life hath planned!

Shall I pass through waves of sorrow?

Then I know it will be best,
Though I cannot tell the reason
I can trust, and so am blest.
God is love, and God is faithful,
So in perfect peace I rest.

With the shade and with the sunshine,

With the joy and with the pain,
Lord, I trust thee! both are needed
Each thy wayward child to train.
Earthly loss, did we but know it,
Ofttimes means our heavenly gain.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VALUE OF THE MYSTERIOUS

And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my lord, what shall be the issue of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel.—*Dan. 12. 8, 9 (Am. Rev. Ver.)*.

THE vital power of religion is not to be found in carefully prepared creeds or well-defined statements, however logical, but in the mysterious, invisible spiritual realities. Daniel had been talking with an angel who had set before his vision wonderful scenes, and recited in his ears marvelous revelations, and though he had heard and seen, he confesses he had not understood one whit, and yet through such revelations oft-repeated, which left Daniel as much in the dark as ever concerning the closed and sealed future, there was developed in Daniel a man of moral might and power. It was like a bath in unseen realities. It was a breath from the upper sky. It left with him a consciousness of angelic messengers and made real to him the presence of the living God in the world. These experiences all wrought together to make a man who at last could go down into the den of lions without fear.

In an age when we are under constant temptation to become secular and earthly, it is wise for us ever and again to recall the fact that the

greatest of all the forces with which we have to do are unseen and mysterious. And this is true about physical things as well as spiritual. Joseph Parker in his vivid style says: "Who would be without mystery? Who would have an earth without a sky? It would not be worth having. Yet the earth is under foot and comparatively manageable; we can dig it, plow it, put stones into it with a view to putting up a house. But the sky no man has touched. The sky is the best part of us. We get all our vegetables out of the sky, though we think we do not. All the flowers are out of the sun, though we think we planted them." The poet sings with true insight when he tells us that

Beneath the cover of the sod
The lily heard the call of God;
Within its bulb so strangely sweet
Answering pulse began to beat.
The earth lay darkly damp and 'cold,
And held the smell of grave and mold,
But never did the lily say,
"O who shall roll the stone away?"
It heard the call, the call of God,
And up through prison house of sod
It came from burial place of gloom
To find its perfect life in bloom.

Dr. Brierly, the English essayist, with keen perception says that while to the mass of men the material universe represents the solid, substantial actuality of things, the truth is that the invisible

and unseen are far more substantial. And a little consideration will show us how true this is. We walk through a city and observe its buildings. What are they? So much stone and lime, iron and timber? If that were all, they would not be buildings, but rubbish heaps. Their principal ingredient is not matter, but thought. These structures are, in fact, embodied ideas. The inner life of the capitalist, the architect, the contractor, the artist who constructed and embellished them; their desire, their will, their education and taste are here made visible. The wood and stone are penetrated throughout with mind, and tell the story of it to all who can see and hear. But some buildings have much more to say than that. Three years ago I went over to the West, and among the foothills in Oregon I stood beside a little story-and-a-half frame building. It was old and weather-beaten and comparatively worthless. Most of the windows were gone, the roof was ragged, and it looked very small to me in comparison with what it did when I moved into it as a child with my father and mother more than forty years before. To a stranger that old house was simply a pile of almost worthless second-hand building material. But I stood there beside it under the stress of great emotion. I saw again that happy day when the family moved out of the old hewn log-house into this, the then new

home; I saw the great logs burning in the fireplace; I saw my father, long since in heaven, as he sat reading for the evening worship from the old family Bible. I saw the sweet face of my mother sitting in the firelight in the glow of her young womanhood. I saw the childish faces of my sisters, one of whom is a grandmother now, as they looked up in childish wonder and listened with me to the message, as it fell from my father's lips, as he read from that holy book. I knelt again with that little group of loving and happy souls and heard again the simple prayer of the man who stood in my eyes in those days as the highest emblem of God. And so I stood beside the old house with bared head, and eyes full of tears, and heart swelling with thoughts too sacred to utter, while all the rest of the group looked at it with only more or less curiosity. What made the difference? The house was what it was to me because it was rich with deposits of the unseen. It was saturated with the inner life of those whom I had loved and who are gone, and those whom I love who still remain. The dead matter of that time-worn building, ugly enough to strangers, was to me beautiful and sacred because of its alliance with unseen, mysterious, spiritual realities.

The discussion of our theme reaches its highest level when we come into the domain of religion. Some one says that some persons think that if

they understand religion they have got it. But no man can understand religion. Religion was never meant to be understood; it was meant to be felt, a secret, subtle, infinite fire. Religion is a climate, not an overcoat. When your life laughs aloud with new joy, springs up to do heroic service, goes out to seek opportunities of doing good, then know that God is at work in your soul, and never mind what you understand. The man who lifts his heart to heaven in prayer, who rises up into communion with the infinite God, so that, like Paul, he feels that his soul is lifted out of the body into the third heaven of inspiration and vision, does not understand it. Paul did not understand it any more than Daniel did his vision. And yet he was a better man, as Daniel was, and as every man and woman of us are, who, whether through joy or sorrow, come into a like experience. Such an one has a roomier nature, a keener fancy, a larger life. The disciples who witnessed the transfiguration of Christ on the mountaintop did not understand it, but they were larger, nobler, finer men forever afterward because of that mountaintop experience.

Dr. James Denney, a man of the deepest spiritual insight and one of the greatest Bible students of our day, declares that careful study of the Gospels has brought into high relief the fact that the kingdom of God as Jesus conceived it is a

transcendent kingdom, not of this world, which comes suddenly, like a thief in the night, or like the lightning flash which illumines the sky in an instant from east to west. We have not to work for it or set it up by our efforts; we have to wait for it, to be ready for it, to make any sacrifice to secure our entrance into it. There is something in it which cannot even be suggested except by words like heaven and immortality. Such an idea of the kingdom of God will deepen in us, I think, the conviction that the mighty work of the Church of Jesus Christ is spiritual. We must not allow the supernatural origin of Christianity and its supernatural issues to escape our consciousness. The Christ in whose name we worship is the exalted Christ; there is no faith in him, no vision of him, which does not bring immortality to light. We weaken the church rather than strengthen it when we undertake to entrench it by compromises and compacts with secular and worldly forces. The Church of Jesus Christ must retain, in order to its true power in the world, that transcendent and heavenly character which it bears in the Gospels, but which so readily vanishes in the streets. This transcendent and heavenly character of the kingdom of God it is essential to hold fast if we would be true to Jesus.

All this it seems to me might give us a profitable suggestion as to the great mission of the Christian

Church in our time. Multitudes of Christian men and women are earnestly and busily engaged in these days in bringing about great economical and social and moral reforms. What I am to say must not for a moment be taken as a criticism upon such service for humanity, but I wish to call your attention to the important fact that Jesus Christ held that the supreme force and power of the kingdom of God was something above and beyond all this, or, rather, back of all this, consisting in an indescribable and mysterious brooding tenderness of the Spirit of the living God over the hearts and lives of men. Christ lived in the midst of slavery, yet he never set free a single slave. Christ never had a vote; he never had economic security, and one might make a catalogue of things that were unjust and wrong in his day about which he said nothing; but he did bring into the midst of that wicked time, and into the midst of a formal and Pharisaical religious organization, the marvelous, the mysterious, the disturbing vision of unseen spiritual realities which created an atmosphere in which true reforms might grow. And is not that forever the supreme mission of the Church of Jesus Christ? It seems to me that in our day we can harm the church and the world in no way so terribly as to undertake to explain away the supernatural and vital reality of Christ and his religion in order that we may

understand it, and bring it within the common, everyday, logical definitions by which we estimate ordinary men and their work. We do not understand Jesus Christ; he is mysterious; he is beyond our understanding. He is above man. He is the Son of God, in some sense which we do not understand, different, above, beyond that in which any other man is the son of God. There is about Christ the mystery and the unfathomable depth of the sky. And the religion of Jesus Christ cannot be put into definite terms such as we may apply to mathematics. Ah, no! The religion of Jesus Christ is a breath of heaven; it is an inspiration, something that is insubstantial, but that, somehow, in a way we do not understand, gets hold of life, and leads it out into the fresh air and the pure sunshine, and sends it back into the market place, and the countingroom, and the law office, and the fields, to buy and sell honestly and to live mercifully with reverence toward God and man.

II

We must not fail to bring out another significant message of this incident: Daniel had seen a great vision. He had been talked to by the angels of God. Something of the greatness and the dignity of his life has been made known to him. But he does not understand it and the magnitude of the revelation is too great for him. What shall

he do? And this is the answer given him by the messenger from God: "Go thy way, Daniel." That is, take up the duty that is next to you. Begin where you are and go straight on doing the right thing that is at your hand.

Thomas Carlyle describes the child in the little out-of-the-way Entepfuhl village, hanging in listening wonder upon the tales of Father Andreas, until a dim world of adventure expands within him, and, standing by the old men under the linden tree as they discussed the knowledge and experience of eighty years, he discovered that Entepfuhl village stood in the middle of a country, of a world! At the age of eight, he woke up to the significance of the old stagecoach, saw that it came on made highways from far cities toward far cities, weaving them like a monstrous shuttle into closer and closer union. The boy made this reflection: "Any road, this simple Entepfuhl road, will lead you to the end of the world." When that boy grew to be a man he saw how true that remark was in spiritual things. Some road leads out of the most excluded village, and connects itself somewhere with the highways of the world. And so the simplest path of human duty connected with your home or your school or your shop leads out to the end of the world in spiritual things. You want to be a good man, a noble woman, you want to fill your true career as the

servant of Jesus Christ, then "Go thy way" in the duty that lies the next step on your path. "What shall be the end, the issue of these things?" said Daniel in his great perplexity. "Go thou thy way," said the angel on the waters, "for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." And so in any confusion or perplexity which life holds for you, the same command must apply. Go thy way; take the simple path of duty in common things, and know that this lowly path will lead you to the end of the world. I once lost my way when traveling by horse and buggy over in New England, and stopped to inquire of an old man hoeing in his garden my way to a certain town some fifteen miles distant. The old man looked up with a placid smile, and, leaning on his hoe handle, said: "I do not know all the way, but I can tell you how to get to Turner's Mill, on Black Creek, and when you get there the miller can tell you how to go on." I was greatly pleased with the old man's directions. It was so much wiser than it would have been, to undertake to guess out the road for me beyond where he knew. He did not know how to guide me all the way through, but he knew how to start me. He did not know all the way; he did not know all the turnings I must take nor all the streams I must cross, but he knew the direction and he knew how to start. So I say to any man or woman among you

who has in you the longing for the good life, the desire for heaven and immortality: I do not know all the strange turnings which there may be in the journey of life for you, what rivers you'll have to cross or deserts to traverse, what crags or torrents may be in your way. But I do know that if you will take the simple road out of the center of your own life, and beginning now will cease to do evil and begin to do what God reveals to be your duty, you will find that this path will lead you home. In the midst of a thousand things that might perplex and confuse you, the path of simple right and duty for you is as plain as the street that runs before your door. Follow that, and you will find yourself traveling home to God. Do that, and you may have the same assurance in which Daniel lived through all his long, stormy, and eventful career. While there were many things about God and his revelation which he did not understand, yet God was ever near him in every time of need and emergency. Do your duty, and you may confidently pray, with Tennyson:

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

CHAPTER XXIV

A CHAIN OF BLESSING

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.—*Num.* 6. 24-26.

I SAW the other day, in a newspaper, some startling headlines, the first of all being, "A Chain of Disaster!" And I have often seen the phrase, "A chain of retribution"; but here we have in six links a chain of blessing. Every link is beautiful and glorious, and they are welded together with such love that we know they can never be pulled asunder.

I

How beautiful is the first link! "The Lord bless thee." It is a sweet thing to be blessed by anybody. It is a horrible thing to be cursed, and a comforting thing to be blessed even by the humblest of beings. We often hear the expression, "I would rather have the good will of a dog than the ill will." Our meaning there is the same. It is better to be blessed than to be cursed. But the nobler the personality of the person who blesses us, and the more we love and appreciate him, the keener we appreciate the blessing. Mr.

Spurgeon used to say that when he was a young preacher he loved to have his grandfather's blessing on his preaching, and that long after the old man had gone home to glory the memory of his blessing upon him was a constant delight and comfort.

There has recently been published a biography of John Delane, who was for nearly forty years the wise and powerful editor of the London Times. It has in it a little human touch that went straight to my heart. You must remember that this man was a powerful, self-contained, reserved sort of man of sixty years of age, and yet this is what he says about his mother. He is writing on New Year's night: "This year has been in one respect a most melancholy one for me. The death of my dear mother was a blow which, although in the course of nature, found me utterly unprepared. I seem to have lost in her a motive for living—so much was I accustomed to act as I thought might please her, and to take her into account in anything I said or did. Nobody now cares about me or my success, or my motives, and that weariness of life I had long felt has been gaining on me ever since. In this frame of mind I meet the new year, weary both of work and idleness, careless about society, and with failing interests." It is easy to read here between the lines and see how precious was the blessing of his mother on this

man's head. If this be true of the blessing of father, or mother, or dear friend among our fellows, how much more precious it is true when he who gives the blessing is our heavenly Father! Our first link in this golden chain is the assurance that the eternal attitude of God toward us is one of blessing.

II

The second link is one of "keeping." "And keep thee" is the word of God. There is a beautiful little touch in Solomon's Song, which is made still more beautiful by the Revised Version, in which we find this sweet and comforting paragraph:

My beloved is mine, and I am his:
He feedeth his flock among the lilies.

To the reader who reads simply the surface of things there is nothing here suggested but the sentimental. It means nothing to the careless reader save a beautiful figure of speech; but if we dig a little deeper, we may have our hearts comforted with a most consoling illustration of the keeping power of God. A recent writer, in a book entitled "The Fields of France," tells how the game preserves in that country often become impracticable for the chase owing to the presence of sweet flowers. Every May a beautiful fault frustrates the sport, for, thick as grass, thick and sweet, the lily of the valley springs in all the

brakes and shady places. The scent of the game will not lie across the miles of fragrant blossoms. The hunters are in despair, and the deer, still deafened by the yelp of the winter's hounds, beholds himself at last befriended by an ally more invincible than water, or forest oak, by the sweet and innumerable white lilies that every Maytime send the hunters home. Feeding among the perfumed flowers the deer exults in delight and safety. The same thing is true of the trusting and faithful soul who enters into the blessing of God, rejoicing in it, delighting in the fragrance of divine love. Such a man or woman not only feeds in the green pastures, and lies down to rest there, but the hounds of evil lose their scent and are turned back disappointed, because of the very sweetness and joy in the midst of which they abide.

And this keeping power of God does not end with this life. How strongly Paul says that he is not afraid to trust Him into whose hands he has put his all, for he is persuaded that he will keep that which he has committed to him against the great day of final reward. It is not only ourselves, and our dear ones who still live with us here, that we may commit into the keeping hands of God, but we know that he will keep those who have gone out from us, after whom our hearts go in such tender pursuit. (Dr. Fairbairn has a beautiful

suggestion, taken from the story of Columbus: How once there gathered on the shore of Spain a group of men and women. They watched three small boats stand out to sea. They saw them vanish into the great, vast, mysterious, and unexplored Western ocean. Whether they passed into the heaven above, whether they floated on the sea below, who could tell? And many a time amid Western isles Columbus and his men thought, "Do they miss us at home? Do they think of us as still living amid these Western isles?" When they returned, as men from death, what did they return to? To love, to home, to all that meant for them fame and immortality. So often on earth we think of our loved dead, now floating on earth, now passed into heaven. Wherever they are, let us lift up our hands and say: "Thou art still in the keeping of Him who says the first is the last. The will of God still remaineth, the will that blesses and keeps. Thou art in his eternal keeping. Has he not said, 'I have the keys of death'?")

III

The third link is a promise of illumination: "The Lord make his face shine upon thee." We all do our best in the light of the face of the one we love. Children will work wonders oftentimes in the light of father's or mother's face. Whittier has a beautiful little poem which illus-

trates this link in our chain of blessing. He sings:

A tender child of summers three,
Seeking her little bed at night,
Paused on the dark stair timidly,
"O mother, take my hand!" said she,
"And then the dark will all be light."

We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before;
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore!

Reach downward to the sunless days
Wherein our guides are blind as we,
And faith is small and hope delays;
Take thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of thee.

None of us will ever come to our best, either in character or achievement, except as we walk in the light of his face who is our Lord and our Master, for in the sunlight of his face every capability we have receives divine impetus, and service becomes our highest joy and our greatest glory.

IV

Our fourth link is a thought of "grace." If we are saved, it will be by the free grace of God. God gives Moses this link of blessing for the people, "And be gracious unto thee." We cannot buy the grace and favor of God. The greatest things in life are always beyond purchase. No

man makes so great a blunder as the man who thinks money can buy everything. The great things, such as love, and hope, and faith, and courage, and peace of conscience, and contentment, are all out of the market where money is of any value. The greatest things can come to us only by the free grace of God.

When Clara Barton was engaged in the Red Cross work in Cuba, during the Spanish American War, President Roosevelt, then Colonel Roosevelt, came to her desiring to buy some delicacies for the sick and wounded men under his command. His request was refused. Roosevelt was troubled; he loved his men, and was ready to pay for the supplies out of his own pocket.

"How can I get these things?" he said; "I must have proper food for my sick men."

"Just ask for them, Colonel," said the surgeon in charge of the Red Cross headquarters.

"O," said Roosevelt, his face breaking into a smile, "then I do ask for them."

And he got them at once; but you notice that he got them through grace and not through purchase. If men could buy the grace of a quiet conscience and a restful heart, how the millionaires would vie with each other at such an auction; but no one can have this chain of heaven's gold except by the free grace of God, which is offered to us every one.

So beautiful and generous is God's grace that it can clothe upon that which has been ugly and unlovable in us, and give it divine charm, so that it will be beautiful and helpful to others. Some poet sings this truth with striking beauty:

A lonely rock by the wayside,
All jagged and seamed and rent,
Yet over its brow the daisies
Their pure, bright faces bent;
Gay columbines danced on slender stems,
And fairy trumpets blew;
From every crevice tufts of fern
And feathery grasses grew,
Till gone were the outlines sharp and bare
That might offend the eye,
And the wayside rock was a charming sight
To every passer-by.

Dear heart, alone and lonely,
Though shattered life's hopes may be,
The Lord who cares for the wayside rock
Much more will care for thee.
Thy deeds of tenderness, words of love,
Like flowers may spring and twine,
Till joy shall come into others' lives
From the very rents in thine.

V

(Our fifth link is the consciousness of God's presence. "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee." We are ennobled and exalted when we feel that God so cares for us and thinks about us and considers us that he is taking a hand in

our lives, and is personally with loving thought revealing his heart to us and doing us honor. I have read somewhere a story of the Crimean War, that when the soldiers returned to England, those who had specially distinguished themselves by heroic service were marshaled in a line to receive from Queen Victoria the crosses or medals which rewarded their valorous merit. As she passed along the line she took the decorations one by one from a salver carried by her side and pinned them to the breast of the happy recipients. As she was pinning one on it slipped from her hand and fell to the ground. A servant, who was near, picked it up and was proceeding to pin it to the soldier's breast, when the veteran drew back and said: "No; I do not value that piece of metal. It is the hand which bestows it that I value." But his face lit up with joy and his eyes filled with tears of gladness and pride when the Queen graciously turned back and pinned it on his breast with her own hands. So the supreme honor and the supreme glory of our life is that through Jesus Christ our Saviour we may come into personal fellowship with God, and may realize that his countenance bends over us with infinite tenderness. You may ask me a hundred questions that I cannot answer about how God makes himself known to my heart, but none of these questions or their lack of answer can for a moment blind

me to the conscious presence of God, who has come to me in joy and in sorrow with the light of his countenance lifted upon me. The poet sings out of Christian experience when he asks:

How does God send the Comforter?
Ofttimes through byways dim;
Not always by the beaten path
Of sacrament and hymn;
Not always through the gates of prayer,
Or penitential psalm,
Or sacred rite, or holy day,
Or incense, breathing balm.

How does God send the Comforter?
Perchance through faith intense;
Perchance through humblest avenues
Of sight, or sound, or sense.
Haply in childhood's laughing voice
Shall breathe the voice divine,
And tender hands of earthly love
Pour for thee heavenly wine!

How will God send the Comforter?
Thou knowest not, nor I!
His ways are countless as the stars
His hand hath hung on high.
His roses bring their fragrant balm,
His twilight hush its peace,
Morning its splendor, night its calm,
To give thy pain surcease!)

VI

Our sixth and last link in the chain is "peace."
"And give thee peace." All the chain of God's blessing leads to peace. However it may begin, it

is at last to issue into peace. Isaiah puts it right when he says that we may go out with joy, tumultuous gladness, with the mountains and the hills breaking forth into singing, and all the trees of the fields clapping their hands, as they sometimes seem to do to ambitious youth; but finally, as the climax of all, we shall be "led forth with peace." None of us know through what we must pass in the mysterious future which lies before us; but if our minds are stayed upon God, we have the assurance, the guarantee, that in whatever shall come to us we may have peace.

A few years ago, when those terrible earthquakes swept over South America, desolating so fearfully so many regions, destroying such vast amounts of property, and multitudes of human lives, a gentleman in England received from a friend in South America a most interesting letter relating his own experience. The night of the earthquake this man happened to be in its path, and was awakened in the night by the shock. He had been a very rich man, but in a few moments all his property was destroyed, his own life was in danger, and he was crushed and bruised. He said that in the midnight darkness there came to him a new experience of God. He readjusted himself, as it were, to the mystery of existence, and new faith was born. This man felt as though illusion had been stripped from him,

as though the earthquake shock were telling him that there is nothing in the outward appearance of things to which the soul ought to cling, there is nothing real and abiding but God. There came home to that man, in the loneliness of night, in the midst of the terror of the earthquake, an assurance of the love of God as the one abiding reality in the universe. The poet is right,

This world is all a fleeting show,
For man's illusion given;
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow—
There's nothing true but heaven!

CHAPTER XXV

THE TRUE TEST FOR THE CHRISTIAN'S CONDUCT

When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord.—*1 Sam. 5. 2, 3.*

ISRAEL was at war with the Philistines, those bold and reckless people which hung along their borders and troubled them generation after generation. One day, as the battle was on, a messenger came flying from the field of strife. All who saw him could tell that something terrible had happened, for as he ran he rent his clothes and put earth upon his head. At last he came to where Eli sat by the wayside watching. Eli was God's prophet, nearly a hundred years of age, and as the messenger drew near he inquired of him, and when he was told that the ark of God had been taken by the Philistines the venerable prophet fell to the earth and died.

These Philistines were idolaters, and in the town of Ashdod they had a temple built in honor of Dagon, their famous fish-god. The lower part of the body of Dagon was shaped like a fish and the upper part was in the form of a man. Dagon was kept on a shelf in the temple, and the people

came in the morning to offer their worship to him, and so when they got possession of the ark of the Lord, which contained the tables of the law, they took it and placed it in the temple by the side of Dagon. They thought this was the God of Israel, and so they placed it alongside of their god, and no doubt thought they would get the blessing of both gods in this way. But in the morning, when they came to offer their morning salutations, to their astonishment Dagon was flat on his face before the ark of the Lord, as though he were worshipping. They hastened to place him again in an upright position and waited with anxious hearts until the next morning. I suspect that many of them had a sleepless night, for the record says they arose very early the next morning and went to the temple, and they were shocked to see that Dagon was not only again fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord, but the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were broken off, and only the old fish stump of Dagon was left, and they fled in despair from the temple of their god.

Now the ark of the Lord was a type of Jesus Christ, and I think that we have in this old story an illustration of a great theme which is full of teaching for us to-day. Everything must finally stand the test of being brought into the presence of Jesus Christ, and everything that is out of

harmony with him, that does not deserve to live in the light of his countenance, will be cast down and destroyed.

I

All wrong will finally go down before Christ. No matter how powerful or entrenched any institution is, if it cannot stand unblushing in the presence of Jesus, it will finally be broken in pieces. One by one we see the Dagon of wrong go down. When Christianity first entered Rome, the Coliseum was the theater in which men were pitted against each other and against wild beasts, and hundreds and thousands of them slain. But the gladiatorial combats went down before Jesus Christ. Human slavery stalked abroad in the world, filling the earth with moans and cries of misery for ages, and the results of it we are still grappling with and suffering from in our own land, but slavery could not stand in the presence of Christ, and as the light of his face more and more illuminated the world it fell down like Dagon before the ark of the Lord and was broken in pieces. And we might well learn a lesson from this in confronting the present serious problems in the treatment of both the white and the black working man in our own land. Man cannot treat his weaker brother with injustice and stand in the presence of Jesus Christ. The superior man must show his superiority and his greatness, not

by cruelty and injustice and oppression, but by helpful service and Christlike brotherhood. In the treatment of our fellow men, black and white, everything that cannot stand up in the presence of Jesus Christ and win his smile of approbation must finally go to pieces.

(The doom of the liquor traffic can be read in the face of Jesus Christ. The liquor saloon, like Dagon, will fall to the ground and be broken in pieces finally, because it is destroying immortal souls for whom Christ died. Political expediency can never stand up in the white light of the face of Jesus Christ to successfully defend or maintain an evil thing. ,

II

Our personal lives in all their details of conduct must stand the test of being brought into the presence of Jesus. It is a good thing for a business man to ask himself frequently whether his business life will stand that test. Some people seem to think that they are made in compartments, with a business compartment, a political compartment, and a religious compartment, all separate, and as a steamship made that way may have one compartment stove in and full of water, and the other compartments know nothing about it, so these people seem to think that their business life and their religious life are so distinct and

separate that one has no influence over the other. There could not be a sadder error. Your business life must be able to stand the light of the face of Jesus Christ, or your whole character will go down in ruin. You cannot be wrong in business and right in religion. The same thing is true of political life. A man cannot lie and deceive in politics and stand unabashed before Christ. There is no difference between political deceit and deceit of any other kind. Our political opportunities and privileges, as well as our business resources, are a sacred trusteeship which we hold for the good of the community, and we must bring them into the presence of Christ if we would be able to judge them truly.

Our personal ambitions and purposes for ourselves must stand the test of Christ's presence. The most insidious temptation to good people is to be vain and proud of their own goodness. The Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men, even as the poor publican, has multitudes of followers in our own time. Beware of that temptation! Some one well says that "Jesus Christ put humility as the foundation of all the virtues, because, unless it is there, you will not keep any of the virtues." A man may be an open-handed, generous man, but as soon as he becomes vain of it even his generosity ceases to be a virtue and becomes selfish. We need to bring

our most hidden and secret motives and purposes continually to the test of the light of Christ's countenance that we may be sure that they may stand in his sight.

We need to bring our benevolence and our sympathy toward others to Christ frequently, to make sure that they are really Christian. The reason why so much that passes for benevolence and Christian sympathy falls helpless to the ground is that it is not really Christian. Take Paul's command to the Romans, "Weep with them that weep." Job says: "Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the needy?" Paul's utterance means a great deal more than that. Paul does not ask us to weep *for* people who are weeping, but to weep *with* them. I doubt if many of us care to be wept for, but if we are in real trouble and somebody weeps with us we never forget it. Mrs. Carlyle mentions in one of her letters that when she had been laid up alone with her trusted maid, the girl came into the room and would constantly bend down over her and rub her cheek against her mistress, and then Mrs. Carlyle goes on and says, "And once when she did it her cheek was wet with tears." And then she says to her husband, "And you would not think that those tears would have cured the headache, but they did." That was true Christian sympathy. When Jesus Christ went to the

home of Martha and Mary in Bethany, at the time of the death of their brother, he did not weep for them, but he wept with them, and we must bring our sympathy and our benevolent conduct, our attitude toward our neighbors, into the presence of Jesus before we can really test it and make sure that it is Christian.

Our pleasures must stand this test of being brought into the presence of Christ. If they fall there, we know they are not Christian and are unworthy of us. God intends that we shall be happy. The keynote of the universe is joy and not sorrow. God has so created us and fitted us into the world that we receive pleasure through every window of the soul. The normal healthy man or woman gets pleasure from all departments of wholesome living. It is a happiness to eat when we are hungry, to drink when we are thirsty, to sleep when we are tired, and through the eyes and ears, and the nerves of sensation, we are played upon by ten thousand influences that give us visions of beauty and sounds and harmonies that fill the soul with delight. So let us never doubt that God means our happiness. But we must seek our happiness along lines and in methods that are in harmony with the truest and noblest character. And when we are in doubt as to the character of any source of pleasure, there is one sure and infallible test, and that is

to bring it into the presence of Jesus Christ. If it appears pure and innocent and wholesome in that white light, then we may rejoice in it; but if, when we bring it into the presence of Jesus, it falls blushing and ashamed to the ground, as Dagon before the ark of the Lord, we must cast it from us, for we know that it is unwholesome and evil.

We must bring our purpose and our effort to bless others and hold them up before Christ if we would make sure they are Christian. What a waste of effort there is in the most holy and sacred directions! How often we see men trying to win others to Christ in a harsh spirit utterly foreign to the Lord. If we would learn the art of restoring souls, we must test our efforts in the presence of Christ. Dr. Watkinson beautifully says that the only man who can restore a great picture is the man who painted it, and that the only one who can restore human nature is the one who knows the secret—only He who in the first instance breathed into us the breath of life, and made us living souls. Jesus Christ is the Great Restorer! If we seek to bless men, we must come to them in his spirit of meekness and of gentleness. A silk manufacturer told Dr. Watkinson that in his manufacturing place they had to take away the steel rods because the silk cut through them! One would have fancied it would be impossible

for soft silk to cut through steel rods, but it was so. Ah, there is nothing in this world like gentleness! That is the gift by which you cut through the sinew of the most obdurate. (Only by gentleness and love will you win men to a purer and nobler life. And if we would win men to Christ, we must so live in his presence that we constantly test our spirit by his.

III

If we are to make Christ real to the people who are associated with us, we must live in such perfect harmony with Jesus that he is incarnated in us and unconsciously revealed in our daily living; and this can never be so unless we are much alone with Christ.) I was reading an address recently in which the writer said that "The secret of religion is religion in secret." There is a story that many years ago an artist wanted to copy one of the masterpieces in the Vatican. At that time an easel was not admitted to the gallery. At first he was in despair, then a thought struck him. Hastening out, he secured rooms, placed his easel and brushes in position, returned to the gallery, planted himself opposite the great picture, gazed upon it, drank in outline, form, first in one and then in another part of the canvas, then hastening out, transferred the outline and, by and by, the tints, to his own canvas, and by slow degrees completed the picture. So we must

give the unseen Artist time, or he never can paint the likeness of Jesus Christ upon our souls. If we talk with God in our closets, and hold communion with our Saviour there, in the open market place and in our social life those who meet us will see something of Christ.

Dr. A. J. Gordon, a famous Boston preacher, who was one of the noblest saints of God, once gave a very beautiful illustration of how the Christian comes to represent Jesus Christ. He said he had seen in New England two little saplings grow up side by side. Through the action of the winds they crossed each other. By and by the bark of each became wounded, and the sap began to mingle, until—on some still day—they became united together. This process went on, and by and by they were firmly compacted. Then the stronger began to absorb the life of the weaker. One grew larger and larger, while the other grew smaller and smaller, withering and declining, till it fairly dropped away and disappeared. And now there are two trunks at the bottom, and only one at the top. Death has taken away the one, life has triumphed in the other. So there was a time when you and Jesus Christ met; the wounds of your penitent heart began to knit up with the wounds of his broken heart, and you were united to Christ. Where are you now? Are the two lives only running parallel? Or has the Word

been accomplished in you, "He must increase, but I must decrease"? Has the old life in you been growing less and less, grace more and more modifying it, until it seems almost to have disappeared? Blessed are you if such is the case. Then you can say, "I have been crucified with Christ, and no longer live, but Christ liveth in me."

(If we are to win men and conquer them for God, we must not only reveal Christ in our words but in our very selves. Sylvester Horne, the English preacher, tells how he was speaking one Saturday afternoon in London in the street, where his words could be heard in a good many public houses. And at the close of his address a man came straight out from one of these drinking places into the middle of the crowd and began to argue with him. He started off in his own way: "Why," he said, "there is the Archbishop of Canterbury with fifteen thousand pounds a year!"

"And what about the Archbishop of Canterbury?" Mr. Horne asked.

But he went on, "And there is the Pope of Rome, not satisfied with less than a hundred thousand a year."

"Never mind them," the preacher said. "What this Book says is not, 'What think ye of the Archbishop of Canterbury, or of the Pope either, but what do you think of Christ?'"

And Mr. Horne said he never saw a greater change come over any man. He took off his hat with an extraordinary gesture of respect, and before all the people, he said: "O, if that is what you are at, I take off my hat to that Gentleman, sir.")

We must show men Jesus in our living if we would charm them to God. Dr. Egerton Young, the Indian missionary, once undertook to preach and read the Bible to five wild Indians up in the far North, but they shook their heads and said: "No, Missionary, we are very much obliged to you for stopping and sharing with us your last meal, but we are not going to be Christians. We don't like the religion of the white man, because we don't like the white man. He has brought whisky among us, and measles, and smallpox; he has robbed and cheated us; and so we don't want the white man's religion."

Mr. Young and his two companions, as well as these five Indians, were suffering greatly for lack of food, and the next day all that they were able to get was one large fish. The fish was scaled and cleaned and they boiled it. When it was ready, the man who caught it cut off about one third and handed it to Mr. Young. But he looked around at the others and said: "No, that is not right." He put the piece back with the other two thirds and began to count—one, two, three, four,

five, six, seven, eight. Then he went to work and carved that fish into eight pieces, handed each man an equal share, and took only his own portion.

One day in the following summer five great, stalwart Indians came tramping into Young's Mission House. They rushed at him, and rubbed him, and mauled him with their great big hands, that were fragrant with muskrats and other things more pungent still. The missionary asked, "What in the world makes you so happy?"

They replied, "Don't you remember the fish?" And they went on to speak of the time when he divided that fish into eight parts.

Mr. Young said: "O, you are those fellows, are you?"

They replied: "We never forgot that sermon of the fish. We offered you one third, and you would not take it; you divided it among the eight, and you took your little bit, and gave us an equal share. When you were gone we came back and rolled logs on the fire, and we sat there all night and talked it over; and we said: 'We must listen to that man. He has talked to us about the Great Spirit and his Son Jesus. We must take him as our Saviour.'"

They had been driven from Christ by wicked white men, but they were won back to him when they saw Christ in a white man. My friends, there is great need that each of us who profess

the name of Jesus should be able to reveal him constantly to those about us. Then the song of the poet shall become a reality in us:

Turn to the world a shining face,
There are sad hearts everywhere;
The smile that you give may help some one to live;
May help somebody's burdens to bear.

Write your blessings in lines of gold;
Your woes in invisible ink;
When your life is seen in the heavenly sheen,
All things will be clear, I think.

Give to the world the best you have,
And the best will come back to you;
'Midst life's weary throng lift your voice in a song,
And its echoes will cleave the blue.

Lend your weak brother a helping hand,
Though he stumble again and slide;
Let your patience be long, as becometh the strong,
And deep as the ocean tide.

Turn to the world a courage brave,
There is some one you may inspire;
When your own heart fails, and your courage quails,
You can turn for your strength still higher.

Give to your God a love sincere,
And a conscience clear and white;
Though the darkness fall black as midnight pall,
You will walk with him in light.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WORKING PRINCIPLE OF TRUE RELIGION

. . . But have not love, it profiteth me nothing.—
1 Cor. 13. 3.

LOVE is the sacred oil which gives smoothness of action and efficiency in results to all the machinery of life. This thirteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is the most superb eulogy of love that was ever written. I never read it but I, somehow, compare it with Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address—the one a eulogy of patriotism, the other a eulogy of love. Paul paints the picture of a splendid character, endowed with all the great gifts and talents for which men are ambitious. Read over these opening sentences and you will see that he holds before the gaze a man whose gifts and graces would combine in one person the eloquence of an Apollos, the logic of a Bacon, the vision and poetic insight of a Shakespeare, the faith of a Luther, and the self-sacrifice of a Saint Francis—surely that would be a wonderful personality, and yet Paul says that though he himself were a man like that, gathering into his own brain and heart and life the gifts and talents and graces of all these men, it would profit him nothing if love were not the dominant note.

This wonderful eulogy of Paul's suggests to us the enormous waste of energy in the world, caused by the lack of love as a working principle. I read not long ago a very interesting economic discussion which showed how the application of scientific principles and methods to the processes of manufacture were doing away with the waste which only a little while ago was so tremendous in our economic life. The author points out that the straw and stubble of flax, wheat, corn, and cotton, once useless, an incumbrance to be burned, has now become valuable raw material.

Within the memory of men now living, coal had but one use, and petroleum, having no value as a light-giver, was known under many names, as so many different kinds of oil, and was administered as a peculiarly nauseous medicine. The discovery that it might be refined and burned caused a revolution in many of the arts of living, but the refining of the oil was accompanied by an enormous waste of a peculiarly indestructible character. On land it was in the way, and in the water it poisoned the fishes. Some chemist discovered in it coal tar, and in the refuse of the oil refineries valuable elements which might be extracted, purified, and made useful in the mechanical arts. Then came a bewildering assortment of dyes, essences, and extracts, in which were to be found all the colors and odors of the floral

world, with their subtle and volatile products, and which quickly entered into the stock in trade of the druggist and the practice of the physician. So this saving of the waste products of manufacture has vastly increased the wealth of the world. And this is only a suggestion of the many ways in which the application of science to common life has turned wastage into sources of wealth. Now, this ought to be an illustration to us of the terrific wastage in the mental and spiritual world which the application of love would turn into sources of mental and spiritual income. The difference between a life that is rich and one that is poverty-stricken is often simply the difference between that of one who utilizes all his resources and of one who allows everything to run to waste except what he considers applicable to the business by which he earns his daily bread.

Our theme this morning should teach us to remember that it is only in the atmosphere of love that any man or any woman can utilize all the resources of a human life and save from eternal wastage the greatest and holiest forces that belong to our heritage.

I

Let us notice some of the great things, things which the world calls great, that are failures without love. Paul assures us, for instance, that it

is only love that can give any real power to eloquence. It may be that when Paul wrote this he remembered the divine persuasiveness of speech that belonged to Ananias, the good man of Damascus, who came to him when he was in need, when he was stunned by the revelation made to him in his noonday vision. Ananias knew all about Saul—that is, he knew about his bigotry, his prejudice against Christ, his cruel and brutal hatred against Christians—and he had talked with God in prayer about it before he came to where Saul was; but when he came, and laid his hands upon his shoulder, his first words were, “Brother Saul.” What an eloquence of love there must have been in those words to the poor broken-hearted man. Great grace was upon the soul that could address as “Brother” the man who had come to the city on a murderous errand, and had been suddenly arrested. It is this that has forever lifted Ananias out of the category of commonplace men. A man may have no reputation for brilliance, but if from association with God he has been so endowed with love that he is able to think and to practice a divinely inspired brotherliness, he belongs to the order of the great.

Multitudes of men in the pulpit, and in the pews, and in the Sunday school classes, who are gifted with glib and fluent speech, are barren of power and barren of results such as they desire,

because the live coal of love from off God's altar has not yet touched their lips. I had a friend, a man of noble powers, who, nevertheless, despite the admiration and respect which he always commanded, won no one to Christ, and grieved over it. But there came a day when God in his great mercy brought such pressure to bear upon that man that he was shaken out of his self-complacency and brought into a divinely human tenderness toward his fellows, and always afterward, though his eloquence was the same as of yore, there was in it a new note of love and sympathy that, somehow, drew men to God. It is not enough to be able with clearness and with graphic diction to bear witness to the faith that is in us. Love like a tincture divine must inspire and make magnetic our words if they are to fulfill our Lord's purpose in us.

II

We may learn also from our theme that learning, and scholarship, and great gifts of intelligence will fail of their greatest purpose unless love set learning on fire with a passion for helpfulness. Paul says, "And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; . . . but have not love, I am nothing."

Dr. Gunsaulus, in a great sermon on "Workers Together with God," says that from the moment there came the inception of the Infinite, a man

was no longer a being on all fours. He stood upright, yet he was never more fixed or realistically related to the planet in which he works out the problem of his life.

So soon as man's personality flashed out into the Infinite, and he found his own personality related to a personal God, so soon there came into his life such an enterprise and partnership that he became warm with love and could realize his destiny. Jenny Lind said she "sang to God." It is only love that can bring such loftiness into our lives that everything is said and done and hoped in God and the great God himself becomes a partner in our lives. Murillo painted a picture for the cathedral of his native city, with all the brilliancy and color and all the enthusiasm of his religious life. When he took it to the cathedral the monks said, "It is giddy; it is not refined."

"Ah," said Murillo, "put it in the cupola; it belongs to the dome."

They did so, and the distance softened the lines. The monks gazed with admiration at the picture when it was in its right place. So never until you are singing to God, like Jenny Lind, never until you are painting for the dome, for the highest that is in you, out of love for God, like Murillo, will your intelligence or your best gifts come to their dominion.

What multitudes of great men have failed for

lack of love! There have been few greater men, in many ways, than Cardinal Wolsey. In history Wolsey stands out as a man of tremendous talents; but if you want to know why he failed, if you want to see the flaw that caused his fall, take up your Shakespeare in the great scene of Henry VIII, and you will perceive the root out of which grew the evils of his life—evils which had overthrown so much in him naturally great. It is profoundly significant that such a man as Shakespeare should put into the mouth of such a man as Wolsey:

Fling away ambition:

By that sin fell the angels; how can man then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?
Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee.

Then again those words of despair:

Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

Shakespeare makes it clear that the secret of failure in this great man's life, in his judgment, was lack of love. He had great knowledge, he had keenness of perception, he was a master of mysteries; but, lacking love, his life was a failure.

III

We are also assured that we may have clear and vital faith, a faith that is acute and correct, and yet fail to bring the soul into fellowship with

God, which is the true end of all faith, through the lack of love. How strongly Paul puts it—"And if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing"! A man may have so much faith that it puts tremendous energy and force into his life, causing him to overcome many obstacles, to surmount many difficulties; but if he lacks love, it will fail to bring the soul into that warm fellowship with God which is the true end of all faith. Love is greater than faith, because faith fails in its purpose without love. History is full of examples of men who have had faith enough to do great deeds, to lead armies, to conquer states, to accomplish wonderful results, and yet, lacking love, lacked that sweet and precious fellowship with God which Christ reveals to us in every action of his life. It is very heartening to take up the Gospels and note how the life of Jesus was knit to the life of God through all the experiences of his earthly life because of his loving faith. Dr. James Denney says that Jesus rejoiced in what seemed disappointment because he knew that the unchanging love of God was in it, and it was the good will of the Father that ordained it to be. And when our faith is bathed in love we too know that it is not chance that underlies our life; it is not fate, which, to a spiritual being, has exactly the same meaning; for what underlies everything is the love in which

the Father and the Son are related to each other, the love in which Jesus lived and moved and had his being on earth. When we look at the pain and shame and sorrow and sin of life, it is not possible for us to believe that the deepest reality in the world is the love of God for his children, unless we look on the cross of Jesus Christ, and see Christ making the sin and the pain and the shame and the sorrow of the world his own, and yet living in the love and joy of God through it all. When we really catch that sight, love glorifies faith. Seeing his love for us, we love him. "Happy are those who see Jesus Christ, and see in him the reality of life, and that that reality is the unchanging love of God. Happy are those who see this, and when they see it, have the world changed for them into a new place, into a happier place, and a safer place; into a mansion of their Father's house, where they can live the life that Jesus lived, and share his joy and confidence in the love of God."

IV

Benevolence and enthusiasm for good causes, indeed, the most astonishing sacrifices for the poor or for righteousness, are of no avail without love. Paul says: "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." As some man says, "It may be easier to die for Christ than

to live for love; to suffer brief agony than to suffer long." Self-sacrifice may be only a tragedy; indeed, it often is the most terrible kind of a tragedy, without love. And among the men who serve, it is the men who are dominated by love who are able to do the greatest service and who are treasured up in the heart of the world forever afterward. It is purposed in this one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln to build a great national arch in Washington as a token of the nation's love of a great public servant. And as we look back over the life of Lincoln we all have to admit that the supreme note in Lincoln's life was love. When Abraham Lincoln came to be President no man had said coarser, harder, crueller things about him than Mr. Stanton; but Lincoln made him secretary of war. Why? Because he believed him to be the most suitable man for the post. Mr. Chase said the most abusive things about Lincoln, but the President made him chief justice of the United States, because he believed him to be the best man to fill the position. One day he said to his friend, Joshua Speed, "Speed, die when I may, I wish those who know me best to be able to say that I have always plucked a thistle and planted a flower when I thought the flower would grow." When he began the work of building up the States that had been so rent and torn he took for his guiding thought

the idea which he expressed in those wonderful words, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, let us bind up the nation's wounds." Dear friends, that is the kind of a life of service that helps the world in its progress toward God. That is the kind of life of which Leigh Hunt wrote:

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
 And saw within the moonlight of his room,
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
 An angel writing in a book of gold.
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
 And to the presence in the room he said,
 "What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,
 And with a look, made all of sweet accord,
 Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
 "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
 Replied the angel. Abou spake more low,
 But cheerily still, and said, "I pray thee, then,
 Write me as one that loves his fellow men."
 The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
 It came again with a great wakening light,
 And showed the names whom love of God has blest—
 And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

V

What the Christian Church needs above everything else to stimulate its onward march and make its triumph certain is a fresh baptism of love. In the book of Revelation Christ tells Saint John that though the church at Ephesus had had patience, and had labored, and borne burdens,

and had been true to the faith, yet, nevertheless, its candlestick was in danger of being removed because its members had left their first love. The glow of tenderness had been lost. The fervor of their love for Christ had burned low. May we not be in the same danger? We must not forget that the supreme power of the church is love, and loss of that will weaken us and make us ineffective.

Many of you have read the stories of the greatness of the court of King Arthur. They tell us that when Arthur came to his own people, accompanied by his loyal knights, he bade them go forth with him, and in the fair love and loyalty that they bore him they all went with their king, and the hosts of Arthur rode out; and they drove back, as some great wave, all the forces of heathenism. Gradually, in the realm, there came a purer, a freer condition. These hordes were driven back, and everywhere the will of Arthur was the will of men, and the sway of Arthur was the sway men loved to know. And then there came a day when from one far corner of the realm a messenger brought the news that the hosts of Arthur had been defeated. Another messenger came from another quarter: "The knights of Arthur have been forced back, and those powers that greatly waste are come into the kingdom of the great king." Then Arthur went forth at the head of his

troops, and he had in his hand that magic sword that had known no defeat. And Arthur fought, and his knights fought with him. But the king was driven back, mortally wounded, and lay dying. Why was there no might in Arthur's arm? Had the magic sword lost its power? Never; but in the heart of Camelot, in the palace of the king, in the innermost circle of his own knighthood, there was the failure of love and loyalty. My friends, it is a question for us. If the Christ is baffled, if the kingdom of God is not making the advance it ought, what is infecting Christian hearts? Let us look into our own hearts to-day, and if, looking there, we stand condemned before our living, loving Lord, then let us with humility consecrate ourselves anew in love and loyalty to our Master.

I would to God I had the power to arouse all our hearts to take up the onward march, carrying the banner of Jesus to victory. I was reading the other day a most interesting account of an incident at the battle of Magersfontein, in the Boer War, where in the early hours of a December morning, in the midst of a splashing rain, the Highland brigade was almost annihilated by a party of Boers lying in ambush. Column after column of those brave Highlanders went down that hill to certain death, and before the morning had passed no fewer than eight hundred and fifty-

six of them were killed, and as many more desperately wounded. During a lull in the battle, when it seemed as if the Highlanders had lost heart, there came wandering into an open space a piper with his pipes under his arm. An officer, Major Anson, who was himself killed an hour later, rushed up to the piper and said in the Scotch dialect, "Blaw, man, blaw your pipes!" The piper replied, "I canna; my lips are dry." The officer tried to pull out his water bottle from his belt and give the poor fellow a drink, but he was unable to do so. The man knelt down at his side, and putting his mouth to the neck of the bottle drew a long draught, then into the muggy, misty air the skirl of the pipes was heard once more, playing the well known tune, "Hey, Johnny Cope, are you wakin' yet?" Gradually from different places his comrades began to gather around him. Parched with thirst and weary with the long fight, they stood there in the lines mopping their faces on their coat sleeves. And once more they charged, and, although at enormous loss, the advance was made.

Dear friends of this great church, I pray God, and it is the supreme prayer of my heart in coming to you, that he may give me the power to wake the note of love and loyalty that shall stir our hearts to a real passion, an invincible passion of loving service for Jesus Christ!

CHAPTER XXVII

GOD'S PROPRIETORSHIP IN HUMAN SOULS

Behold, all souls are mine.—*Ezek. 18. 4.*

As Dwight Hillis has graphically described it, the time was when science talked man down, made him a speck in an infinite universe, a grain of sand, a mere drifting leaf, unworthy of the notice of an infinite God. But the newer and better science lifts man up toward his rightful place. He is no longer a leaf drifting on the seashore, but the jeweled cup of God, set with a thousand diamond points, where all about him is only drifting sand. Our astronomers, through their long-visioned eyes, have analyzed the sun and stars and planets. They have parceled out the heavens, they have gone over the map of the sky, testing these distant worlds as to their heat, their cold, their gas, the possibility of vegetable and animal life. To their astonishment they have discovered that most of these shining bodies represent fire, in which any form of life is impossible. The rest represent gaseous conditions, where vegetable life is equally impossible. Turning to the planets they find that even the two upon which they have built their highest hopes prove disappointing. Mars

has but a tiny fraction of the heat that our earth has. Vegetable and animal life is absolutely impossible in the conditions which surround her. Neptune is found to have only one face toward the sun, the one side knowing the most dreadful cold, the other fierce heat, so that changes are so rapid as to make even the lowest forms of vegetable life impossible. And so the great scientists of the world have entirely retreated from the old position as to habitable worlds, and it seems now certain that "God has set his heart upon this little earth of ours. Physical science has driven us back again into a little earthly Garden of Eden. Again we stand out on the grass in the cool of the evening, and man keeps a tryst with Him who walks with his earthly child. Answering with adoring thoughts the gaze of yonder sky, man bows his head and whispers, 'My Father!'"

Our text is one of those sublime and splendid utterances of the Bible that lift us entirely out of the commonplace and exalt our thoughts to the highest plane. "All souls are mine," says God. Then the divine lineage must be found everywhere in human hearts, and man stands the test of investigation. Sin has wrought its terrible havoc upon him in every land, yet though there are long reaches of distance between the developed and educated and Christianized man and the poor waif races who have been ground down under the

heel of ignorance and superstition and heathenism, yet the trace of the divine Fatherhood is to be found everywhere.

Dawson, the English evangelist, says that the first time he heard the "Symphony to the New World" performed it produced a remarkable impression upon him. And as the symphony went on he was strangely impressed with a curious sense of something familiar about it. He could not make it out. There was all the great orchestra playing apparently magnificent music—and it was magnificent music—yet all the while he seemed to hear behind it something he had heard a thousand times before, and then he found out what it was. The "Symphony to the New World" is made up, for the main part, of Negro and plaintive airs, such as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." And in this great symphony these Negro airs, which no one had thought much of, had been taken hold of by a great musician, who had turned them to wonderful use. So there is a melody running through the common heart of mankind at its poorest, at its lowest. It is the pledge of our divine sonship. And Jesus Christ takes these threads of melody into his own most perfect life and shows what the music of humanity is. And, looking at Christ in his perfection, we look through Christ to man in his deepest degradation, whether it be in some heathen land or in the filthy cesspools of

our own great cities, and we say that man down there in the mire has the thread of melody in his heart that becomes glorious music in Christ. It is of the same sort. All it needs is but the divine musician. It is there waiting to be discovered, and we must remember this divinity and dignity of human nature if we are to feel about men as God and Christ feel.

I

God is the Father of all souls, and Jesus Christ died to redeem all men, and the obligation of our sonship to God and our brotherhood to humanity everywhere is upon us. Paul clearly recognizes this in the opening of his letter to the Romans when he says: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

If Paul were a debtor in his day to every man who had not heard the Gospel, how much more are we debtors in our day to our brothers and sisters who still live in darkness. We are the heirs of the ages. For us heroes have fought and martyrs have died; for us prophets and psalmists have

spoken and sung; all the glory of the Christian dispensation, with its long train of growing civilization, has fallen like a mantle about our shoulders. Our minds and hearts have been enriched with the bounty of God in Jesus Christ. If Paul had to say, "I am debtor, both to the Greeks and to the barbarians," how can we escape saying, "I am debtor to the Chinaman, and the Hindu, and the African, and the lonely dwellers in the isles of the seas"?

The needs of our brothers and sisters are very great in many parts of the world. Dr. Karl W. Kumm, a famous Christian traveler in Oriental lands, tells many things that would stir the blood of any man or woman with a true heart. In the native quarter of Alexandria, in Egypt, he sat one evening at his window. A woman beneath his room had a little boy who was very fond of making mud pies in front of the house. He saw her step into the doorway and call the little fellow. "Come in, darling: don't get your clothes so dirty. Come in, sweet one." No answer from the little four-year-old.

The mother stepped into the street, looking about to see that there were no men near to watch her. She laid kind, motherly hands on the child to take him into the house. "Come, little one. I will give you sweets. Come!" Her husband was at that moment coming around the next corner,

and stood still to see what would happen. What did happen was this: the child turned round on his mother, and doubling up his little dirty fist, he beat her right in the face, and snarled, "Daughter of a dog!" tearing himself loose. The father stepped up. To do what? To punish his child? O, no. To pat his brave little son on the back, smile upon him, and say: "Brave little boy! Thou magnificent little fellow." Proud of a son who could treat a mother thus! Christian women, are you not debtor to these millions of mothers who are thus ground down from birth to death and dwarfed through all eternity?

Only four years ago Dr. Kumm was traveling in the south of Tripoli, when he met a slave caravan—some three hundred camels, loaded with ostrich feathers, ivory, and morocco skins, and some twenty or thirty little slave girls straggling along behind. Most of them were nothing but skin and bones, with sore feet, after that terrible journey of fifteen hundred miles or more over the burning wastes of the great Sahara Desert, oftentimes for seven or eight days without water, except that which could be carried in skins on the backs of camels. Dr. Kumm spoke to one of the men in charge, and said, "Surely you cannot take these slave children into Tripoli?" He smiled. Dr. Kumm said, "The consuls would not allow it."

He smiled and asked in turn, "What do the consuls know about it?"

"But what do you do with these children?" the Doctor persisted.

"We take them to the gardens, to the houses of the rich Arabs. Then at evening time we put them on board a Turkish vessel, and send them to Asia Minor and to Constantinople—to the harems of the rich Turks"—to a life of misery in a far-off country.

Christian mothers and fathers, think of these little girls, twelve years old, walking through a burning tropical sun, almost without clothing, very little food, oftentimes in sore want of water, no one to cheer them, for fifteen hundred miles through the desert, along one of the great highways of slavery, walking to their doom. In God's name, are we not debtors to these little girls, and the mothers from whom they were stolen or who were probably murdered when they were stolen? Every missionary post added to the beacon lights of Christ's gospel in that dark continent hastens the day when this still open sore of the world shall be healed.

We cannot take refuge with Cain, and ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" It is within our power to help, and to the limit of our power we must help, or we shall not clear our own skirts of the blood of our fellows. Do you remember Hood's

poem which he calls "The Lady's Dream"? And do you recall how he represents those whom she might have befriended as passing before her in a ghastly procession? She exclaims in passionate despair:

"The wounds I might have healed,
The human sorrow and smart;
And it was never in my soul
To play so ill a part;
But evil is wrought for want of thought
As well as want of heart.

"Each pleading look that long ago
I scanned with heedless eye,
Each face was gazing as plainly there
As when I passed it by;
Woe, woe for me if the past should be
Thus present when I die.

"No need of sulphurous lake,
No need of fiery coal;
But only that crowd of human kind
Who wanted pity and dole;
In everlasting retrospect
Will wring my sinful soul."

These lines cannot fail to remind us of those terrible words of Jesus himself, when, in describing the last accounting, he says it shall be said by Him that sitteth on the throne to those who have neglected their opportunities toward their brethren: "Depart from me, . . . for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was

thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison; and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

If we shall make our Christianity irresistibly convincing to the world of our day, we must, to our limit, in Christ's spirit, and in his name and power, do Christ's work to the ends of the earth. Dr. Morgan Gibbon went one Sunday morning, in the beautiful city of Lombardy, Milan, to the white marble cathedral, which is one of the seven wonders of the modern world. It was filled with worshipers. It was the day when the relics of the patron saint of the church, Carl Borromeo, were displayed on the altar. He stood a little behind that altar. People were crowding in front of the relics, and after awhile his attention was called to a window behind him. It was a marvelous creation. It was a work of art in which the artist sought, in his particular medium, to present the gospel of the religion of Jesus. He had divided his window into a large number of panels, and every panel or pane contained a picture, and every

picture was taken from the four Gospels. Whenever you looked at this window you saw Jesus Christ—Jesus healing the sick, Jesus blessing the children, Jesus at the well, Jesus washing the disciples' feet, Jesus on the cross. It was simply ablaze with Christ—with the beautiful deeds of Christ, with all the irresistible grace of that great life. And as you looked you felt: "There is a religion there that no lapse of time can ever touch, that no criticism can affect, no argument can overthrow. It goes straight to the heart. It makes the appeal that beauty makes. It takes you captive. You have only got to see it to know it is true!" But as he looked from the window to the altar and saw that superstitious crowd gathering about the relics of the dead, Dr. Gibbon says that he felt that he was standing between two different religions; two absolutely different religions; that there was nothing whatever in common between the religion of the window and the religion of relics. There is a message here for us. A religion that simply nurses its creed and its traditions for its own luxurious selfishness is a useless thing. But our glorious Christianity, lived by great-hearted men and women who love Christ and are inspired by him, and who reach to the ends of the earth to cleanse the leper, to free the slave, to open the eyes of the blind, and waken dead hearts into life, must charm all mankind!

II

God's proprietorship in human souls is evidenced by the fact that no tribe has been found so poor in human quality that it cannot respond to the divine message. A Wesleyan missionary came back two or three years ago from South Africa and told of a native class meeting where an old gray-haired woman, her shriveled face drawn with emotion, rose and said, "Before the missionary came my soul was a thing I could not fathom, but my heart was bleeding for God."

When Darwin first landed on the bleak shore of Tierra del Fuego, he found savages there of so low a grade that he declared them below the line of redemption in any form. In his "Naturalist's Voyage" he says: "They are men whose very signs and expressions are less intelligible to us than those of the domesticated animals, men who do not possess the instincts of these animals, nor yet appear to boast of human reason; or, at least, of arts consequent on that reason." Twenty-five years later Darwin touched that same shore after missionaries had been at work for that brief space of time, and, like an honest man, convinced by facts, he said he could not have believed that such a change was within the range of possibility. So the men of Uganda, the savages of New Guinea, the martyrs of the Boxer movement in China, all show that Christ, if his love has but an oppor-

tunity, can write his name on every kind of human heart, and stamp his image on every human face.

E. J. Peck, who tells the story of the Eskimos, gives us the record of souls in those frozen regions of the North that lay like dead seeds beneath the snow, but awoke to life when once the warmth of the Sun of Righteousness had begun to penetrate the dark doors of their "igloos" upon the frozen sea.

John G. Woolley, on a recent tour of the world, made a voyage in the South Seas, visiting the Fiji Islands. In the whole history of moral degradation the Fiji Islands probably lead the world. In the early days of the nineteenth century it was known by sea captains and travelers as "The Hell of the Pacific." Up to 1835, when two Wesleyan missionaries took their lives in their hands and landed at Lakemba to preach the gospel of Christ, the darkest blot upon the earth was the group of two hundred and fifty beautiful islands. The people were polygamists; they were infanticides; women were treated as beasts of burden; wives were killed when their husbands died, and their bodies were used to line his grave and make it soft. The feeble old men and women were buried alive by their children; they were cannibals; human sacrifices entered into all their important undertakings. Victims who were to be eaten were bound and

placed alive in the ovens; theft and lying were universal. When a chief launched a new canoe the rollers on which it was made to slide down the shore into the water were living men. When the new canoe was ready for use ten men were slaughtered in it, as a dedication ceremony. This was the condition when Christianity was introduced, and the facts are not exaggerated. As late as 1840 the United States Exploring Expedition, commanded by Commodore Wilkes, and including such reliable men as Dana, Maury, and Pickering, gave corroboration to the ghastly stories of former travelers, whose records were disbelieved because it was deemed impossible that the human race could be sunk so low.

But Mr. Woolley bears new testimony to the marvelous fact that this former "Hell of the Pacific" has become transformed by the gospel of Christ, until the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands would average high among the most civilized nations in the world. Ninety per cent of all the inhabitants of these islands are members of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church, and practically all are professed Christians. These people, whose grandfathers were cannibals, are now generous, honest, and hospitable, exhibiting in a high degree the graces of the Spirit. God was true when he said, "Behold, all souls are mine." Let us be true to God and win all souls back to him.

III

Our theme suggests to us the motor power of Christian missions. In referring to the motive for missionary work we found our illustration in the words of Paul. In assuring ourselves of the motor power essential to our success, we may also turn to him. (Paul says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Dr. John Clifford says that Saul of Tarsus was a pauper; but Paul of Damascus had annexed a mine without a bottom, a mine of incorruptible gold. Try to assess his wealth! Take full stock of the addition he has made to his personality by becoming a Christian; see him in his original poverty, shut down and shut up in the body of his death, flung aside as a derelict, "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked"; and now behold him! He has bought of Christ the white garments in which he is clothed; eye salve with which he sees; gold refined in the fire, with which he is rich—but how rich you cannot say, unless you have by searching found out the Almighty and know the mind of the Lord. For he has, yes!—this is the awe-inspiring fact—he has annexed God, and in Christ is one with him, with the whole of God; God's infinity supplying all his needs, and flooding him with increasing strength to work for the salvation of the lost

human race. Think of it! God is made to him inexhaustible forces of liberation and illumination, wisdom and ministry. Just as steam is made to Watt and his successors the power of locomotion, and electricity is made to Cyrus Field and his successors down to Thomas Edison the power of communication, so Christ is made from God power and wisdom for salvation.

I call you into partnership with Paul in this high fellowship with Jesus Christ in the work of blessing humanity. I do not call you to any superficial, holiday playing at Christianity; but I call you to give yourself to God, that he may be able to give himself to you. I call you to give your purse, your brains, your tongue, your time, your home, your children to God, that he may glorify them all. Religion means sacrifice and consecration; but, believe me, my brother, the religion that costs is the religion that blesses. Some one has said that the portal frowns gloomy with "Sacrifice" written above; you enter with shrinking steps, when, lo, a radiance your life has never known, a bliss that is only to be reached through the portal of sacrifice. Young Christians, the life that costs, believe me, is the life that is worth living. Give yourself to Christ, not for your own salvation only, but for his world-wide crusade, and you will find life as romantic, as worth living, to-day as in any great heroic age of the past.

I call you to a partnership in a victorious movement. I do not call you to a losing fight. Christ will win. All souls belong to God. All that is needed to capture the world is for us to show it a church transfigured by the presence and spirit of Christ. Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." We shall win. Dr. Watkinson said the other day that he had heard of some erratic German astronomer who says he has found out that the sun is a bubble, and he says he can demonstrate it. Watkinson wittily says that that astronomer is another bubble. But, mind, if the sun is a bubble, it is a wonderful bubble. It is, as Milton says, of this great world, eye and soul. It touches the hills and they shine in green verdure; it fills the valleys with corn; it creates the morning. So now and then you hear some erratic and self-sufficient skeptic who says about this Bible that it is a bubble. But let us remember, and let the remembrance inspire our hearts, that this Bible never shines into a cottage but it makes it more glorious than a king's palace; it never brings its influence to bear on a poor fallen wretch in the gutter but he stands upon his feet redeemed. Our missionaries never take it into a heathen land but blossoms spring out. It changes the hells of earth into heavens of peace. Let us carry this Bible and this gospel, in the strength of God, to all the souls which belong to him!

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TWIN SEALS OF LOVE AND POWER

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.—*Song of Solomon* 8. 6.

THE paragraph to which this sentence forms the open door is one of those literary gems with which the Bible abounds. It is the appeal of love for preëminence, its argument for being given the chief place. In all the literature of love there is not a more splendid or majestic passage. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned."

If we take this to be a literal love story, we have a woman asking her kingly lover to have her name or likeness stamped upon her beloved's heart and arm; on his breast above his heart as the seat of affection, and on his arm where it might be constantly in view. There is suggested the desire of every loving heart to be kept in tender remembrance by one who is the object of its love. Love

must have love in return. There is a suggestion, also, of a fear that love might be diminished by distance, especially where it may have rivals. Love trembles at the thought of the proverb proving true, "Out of sight, out of mind." And so to be set as a seal upon breast and arm, as a reminder of the deathless character of her affection, and of the preciousness of a love which all the wealth of Solomon could not have bought and which could be repaid only by his love in return, is the request which is made by this devoted soul.

We do no violence to Scripture if we spiritualize this beautiful incident. It is in harmony with the spirit of God's revelation to us concerning his love for us in Jesus Christ and our love for him which is aroused in return. Paul says concerning our love for Christ that "We love him, because he first loved us." The great sacrifice of Christ in our behalf, the love that saw us in our sins and put aside the glory of heaven to come down to earth and suffer and die in our stead, is surely a love which can never be repaid except by love itself.

This passage suggests to me another meaning, however, which is very comforting to my own heart, and which I hope may comfort us all. The arm is the symbol of strength and power, and when a trusting woman asks to be set as a seal upon her beloved's arm does it not mean that the

strength of that arm is pledged for her protection? A seal in those old days was used in the place of a signature to a deed, or a compact of the most sacred kind. To be set as a seal upon the arm of a strong king, like Solomon, meant that the power of the great king was pledged for the defense of the woman who loved him. She may have been as weak as the vine clinging to the giant tree, but all the strength of the king became hers if the seal of this sacred compact was set upon his arm.

If we set upon this story the seal of the Spirit, then it can suggest to us only the splendid strength of Christian character. And the Christian, if he be true and genuine, is the strongest, most forceful human character in the world, inasmuch as goodness is stronger than evil, purity stronger than vice, sobriety stronger than drunkenness, peace stronger than strife, joy more forceful than sorrow. Inasmuch as love is stronger than hate, or, indeed, God stronger than the devil, so much greater is the strength and forcefulness of true Christian character than any personality a wicked world can present. And the character which is presented by Christ and Paul as the ideal Christian is ever a strong, forceful personality. The manliness of Jesus and Paul stands out as a model of the strength of the noblest chivalry. Christians cannot be weaklings. We must be "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Yet it is still another thought upon which I wish to put the emphasis in our study at this time. This loving woman was not satisfied with a compact which gave her all the strength of Solomon's kingdom. That might satisfy an ambitious adventuress, but it could never satisfy a sincerely loving heart. She longed for something more than that, and so makes her appeal, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart." If we spiritualize that we shall understand the poet who sings:

Set me as a seal upon thine arm,
On that mighty place of mighty strength,
For all other arms to dust at length,
Turn, dear Lord.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
On that mighty place of mighty love,
For all other hearts must cease to move,
But thine, dear Lord.

And thus ever on thine arm and heart,
In a covenant thou canst not break,
Thou'lt remember, though I sleep or wake,
I am thine, dear Lord.

If we are thus set as a seal upon the heart of Christ, we shall not only have the strength of his mighty arm to sustain us in the hour of weakness and temptation, but we shall be adorned with the beauty of his love; the sweetness of his sympathy and tenderness shall be given to us. We shall not only be strong in goodness and justice and truth, but also beautified by love.

Is not that the great need of the world to-day? Is it not the crying need of all civilization that we shall have great characters, strong to do and dare and achieve, but whose strength shall be softened and beautified by the gentleness of Jesus Christ? We are living in a time when strong men abound. There are more giants in these days than at any time in the history of the world. Men spring up on every side who have the genius to seize the mighty forces of nature and master them and make them their servants. In iron and coal and oil and gas and electricity, and, indeed, every elemental force of the world in which we live, men are rising up to seize and with the strong arm to control and master them for their own good, and, incidentally if not otherwise, for the good of humanity.

We hear a deal of talk in our time about corporations and trusts, and we see in this multiplication of wealth opportunities for the great aggregation of wealth into a few hands until some people are frightened and can see only ruin in the outlook. Is it not, after all, the old struggle of the centuries after power? And the result must depend altogether on how the power is used. We do not care how strong a man is if his strength be controlled and adorned by love. If his strength be governed by selfishness, then evil will come from his power.

If all strong men had the spirit of Jesus Christ, there would surely be no crying out against great strength in single hands. Christ exercised the most marvelous power over nature and over human life. If he had used his strength to speak into being storms to sweep away villages and shipwreck the boats of the fishermen, he would have been a man of terror. But when he used his power to speak the taunting waves into quiet with his words of, "Peace, be still," his power was a benediction and not a threat. If he had used his power to make men deaf or blind or lame or dumb, or to bewitch them with demoniac spirits, what a curse his strange control over human nature would have been to the people with whom he lived! But when he went about among them opening deaf ears, causing blind eyes to see, making the lame to leap for joy, healing the lepers, dispossessing devils, and raising the dead, his every step was a blessing, and his great power so beautified by love made him the most magnetic character the world has ever seen.

Now, that is what God is trying to do for the whole world—to bring strength and beauty together. As Professor Horne says with striking force, strong characters are not rare, and beautiful characters are not rare; but characters that are both strong and beautiful are far too rare. It is so difficult to be firm and not to be hard, to be

inflexibly just and not to be cold, to have the solid virtues that make for strength and with them the soft and gracious qualities that command our love. Some men and women have the decorative virtues. They are full of generosity, noble impulse, charity, magnanimity, and enthusiasm; but they have not with these the strength of mind and will which makes for sound justice and common sense. Some people, on the other hand, have only the fundamental qualities. They are just, but they cannot be generous; honest, but never liberal; truthful, but never merciful; they have principle, but they have never yielded to a wise enthusiasm or been moved out of their slow, plodding habits by some sacred zeal for a holy cause. The world yields to the strong men; it admires them, it honors them; but it does not love them. They command its respect, but they have no power to arouse its affection. On the other hand, the world's heart is drawn out to the beautiful lives, but it often discovers, to its pain, that it must not lean upon them. They are not to be trusted in hours of real trial and perplexity. What they gain in heart they seem to lose in head; and we grow conscious that while they are tender, generous, and kind, they are not wise. And so the sad fact remains that there are comparatively few who are not only strong, but beautiful, and are not only beautiful, but strong.

Yet I return to the statement that it is the supreme mission of Christianity in this world to reproduce the miracle of Jesus Christ in the incarnation of his union of strength and love in every man and woman among us. I think we are too ready to excuse ourselves for the lack of the gracious and gentle virtues. Many think of gentleness and meekness and forbearance and patience and all those virtues that sweeten human intercourse very much as some rude and rugged backwoodsman, conscious of his own strong physical ability and honest straightforwardness, is likely to think of fashionably cut clothing and easy manners and the little ceremonies and etiquette of polite society. He has for them, at the best, a sort of good-humored contempt. They are all right, he thinks, for men and women with no work to do and no serious concerns of life to consider, but the great fundamentals of honesty and genuineness, frankness and sincerity seem so much more important to him that all the gentler graces are, to his mind, things to be relegated to women and children. So many a man, conscious of his honor and strength, thinks far too little of the great addition which would be made to his strength and the glory which would come to him if it were clothed upon with the beauty of love.

If God cares for beauty, and thinks it worth while to go to the trouble of crowning a tree with

leaves, of growing mosses and vines over the rock, of spreading a green carpet over the hillside, of planting flower beds in the meadow and the valley, of robing the autumn forest in gorgeous colors and burnishing all the fields of toil with yellow gold; if God thinks it worth while to clothe the winter world in white; to fill the midnight sky with jewels; to make every morning sunrise and every evening sunset glorious as a hallelujah chorus of angels, then surely we cannot permit ourselves for a moment to believe that beauty is not a necessary thing.

But, after all, our greatest illustration must be the life of Jesus himself. In this one case God has shown us what he wants in a man, and in him we have all the beauty and glory of humanity in a single character. In him we see the strength of the giant, the forbearance of the saint, the courage of the hero, the loving sympathy of a woman, the simplicity and confidence of a child. In putting on the "new man" God intends that we shall put on all of these glorious qualities.

I know a man in an eastern town who has unlimited wealth at his command, and whose learning and taste and poetic fancy have inspired him with the idea of gathering together in spacious conservatories the most beautiful plants and flowers from all parts of the world. His agents are traveling in every land, searching far and

wide, and sending home, as they discover them, consignments of noble trees, rare shrubs, and beautiful flowers. From the jungles of India, from the great forests of South America, from the valley of the Congo, and from the mountains of Switzerland come these beautiful things, until his flower palaces are glorious with the gathered loveliness of the ends of the earth.

The work of building up the Christlike character is not unlike that. We are to send out our living thoughts into all quarters of literature and art and religion; into all the life of living men and women; into all the hopes of immortality in heaven; into all the realms of spiritual meditation and communion, and seize "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely," and bring them into our lives and set them to the music of Christian living. As another has well said, "Admiration is useless unless it turns to imitation." When Hooker, the naturalist, was in the Himalayas, he was once so placed as to be obliged to throw away specimen after specimen of new flowers. He had nowhere to put them. Do we not often gaze with delight upon the beauty of some saintly personality, and then quietly drop it as though there was nothing more to be done? We wander amazed amid the blossoms of a brilliant character, and go home to

our artificial flowers, putting etiquette for humanity and politeness in the room of love. All spiritual developments that are possible for any soul in Jesus Christ are possible for us. We have seldom seen, as yet, what Christ can do with a soul absolutely surrendered to him. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." God help us to realize this! As James Dunk says: "Be lovely in thy doing, so shalt thou give rapture to God, whose beauty-thirst is infinite. Be lovely because, too, there is in beauty immeasurable power." Bayne says, "Tennyson's chief mark is charm." It is by this charm he holds not only Englishmen but all civilized humanity. So Christ is the creator of charm in character. Love is the supreme magnetism. Every Christian personality may be charming. And if we surrender ourselves completely to that divine charm of soul-beauty, few will be able to resist the holy fascination. "Rare soul-beauty fascinates the world. It surprises them. They have grown to think it impossible, and they are frequently wearied to death by the ruck of men, the repellent crowd with the coarse passions, and their showy but sickening unrealities. Sinners nauseate each other. How they long at times to see a charming soul, full of Christlike beauty! God is supreme loveliness,

but 'No man hath seen God at any time.' Yet there is a way of bringing God within eyeshot. 'If we love one another, God abideth in us.' Then he is seen."

The seal General Gordon used on all the documents he signed while shut up in Khartoum had a history of exceeding interest. A friend named Floyer volunteered to prepare Gordon a seal with his name in Arabic characters upon it. For this purpose he chose an old coin, which he partially melted and refashioned. When the seal was completed it was found that two words that had been on the coin were still legible. The words were in Arabic and signified, "The Messenger of God." Gordon noticed them and was much pleased, and in a letter to his friend said his daily prayer was that he might always remember to be as the messenger of God to the Soudan people. It is our highest honor that we may each of us be the messenger of God in bearing forth the Christly character before the gaze of our fellow men.

I have no doubt I speak to many who are conscious of a deep and holy longing to realize this life of strength and love. You feel within yourself the stirring of a nobler and sweeter life than you have yet lived. You have dreamed of it, and in holy vision hours it has seemed possible, but you have never had the courage to invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit to set your dream to music in

the daily deeds of common living. James Whitcomb Riley has a most beautiful poem, entitled, "The Song I Never Sing," which gives voice to these haunting premonitions of nobler life which many of us feel. His song runs:

As when in dreams we sometimes hear
 A melody so faint and fine
 And musically sweet and clear
 It flavors all the atmosphere
 With harmony divine,—
 So, often in my waking dreams,
 I hear a melody that seems
 Like fairy voices whispering
 To me the song I never sing.

Sometimes when brooding o'er the years
 My lavish youth has thrown away—
 When all the glowing past appears
 But as a mirage that my tears
 Have crumbled to decay—
 I thrill to find the ache and pain
 Of my remorse is stilled again,
 As, forward bent and listening,
 I hear the song I never sing.

O nameless lay, sing clear and strong,
 Pour down thy melody divine,
 Till purifying floods of song
 Have washed away the stains of wrong
 That dim this soul of mine!
 O woo me near and nearer thee,
 Till my glad lips may catch the key,
 And with a voice unwavering,
 Join in the song I never sing.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST

They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast?—*John 11. 56.*

THIS question had its origin, no doubt, in a great variety of motives. Doubtless the motive in most cases was curiosity. The fame of Jesus had spread throughout the country. They had heard of his wonderful works—stories concerned with his opening the eyes of the blind, making deaf men to hear, cleansing lepers, and causing lame and crippled people to walk and run, and last of all had come the startling announcement of his bringing Lazarus back from the grave. This miracle had been the talk of the country in an ever-widening circle for many weeks, and they had come up from the towns and villages and country places to the feast, hoping more than for anything else that they might see Jesus. Of course among them were some sullen and vicious Pharisees who hoped to see him that they might do him harm; but the great multitude felt a true desire to see him, and to hear from his own lips the messages of wisdom. To see Jesus and hear him speak, and possibly be healed by him, was the prevailing motive that had drawn the people to the feast.

and so on every lip was the question anxiously asked, "Will he come to the feast?"

We are drawing near to our feast of Christmas good cheer, and I can imagine no theme more appropriate to the occasion and no theme with more promise of profit in it than that we should ask ourselves the question, "How can I insure the presence of Jesus as my guest at Christmas time?"

I

Since we are assured in God's Word that Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," we have some sure ground of faith as to the conditions which are necessary to assure to us the presence of Jesus as our Christmas guest. In the first place we know that if we hold Christ in loving remembrance, and think about him, recalling his kindnesses, and converse with our friends about his loving personality, he will be with us as our guest and commune with us.

One of the sweetest incidents in all the New Testament is the story of Christ's appearance to the two disciples, in all probability Cleopas and his wife, who on the morning after the resurrection walked out of Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus. As they went they conversed about their experiences with Christ; they talked over all they had known of him; and as they talked the tears rolled down their cheeks, and their hearts

melted. And in the midst of their conversation, while they were yet a long way from their destination, Jesus came and walked with them. Their eyes were holden so they did not recognize him, and the Stranger, as they took him to be, with sympathetic kindness deferentially asked them what was the subject of their conversation, which evidently gave them such great sadness. And they told him that they had been talking about Jesus, a wonderful personality who had lived a life of great purity and beauty, who had wrought marvelous deeds of kindness and love, and who had been taken by wicked hands and crucified, and it was now the third day since his death, and some of the women among his friends who had gone to the tomb in the morning had brought back news of his resurrection, and they knew not what to think. Then the Stranger began to talk to them about the Old Testament Scriptures, and he recalled the prophecies to their minds, and showed them with great clearness how the death and resurrection of Christ were part and parcel of the prophecies of the old prophets, and as he talked their sadness dropped from them. Their tears were dried, their heavy hearts became buoyant, and their cheeks flushed with hope and faith. About this time they came near to their home, and the mysterious Stranger was bidding them farewell and going on his way. But the conversation had

been such a comfort to their hearts that they could not bear to have him leave them. So they begged and entreated him to go in with them and spend the night as their guest. He went in with them and tarried until the evening meal was spread, and when they sat down at the table he took the place as host rather than guest, and asked a blessing upon the food. And as he did so their eyes were opened, and they knew him. And after he was gone on his way, they said one to another, with throbbing hearts, eyes full of tenderness, cheeks all aglow, and voices soft with love, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?"

This is a sure way to have Jesus with you on Christmas Day. Think of him lovingly, tenderly—talk about him to your friends, recall all his kindness and mercy, and the dearest guest in all your company on Christmas Day will be your Saviour and your Lord.

II

He will come if you feel your need of him and send for him. Christ had some friends who lived in Bethany—Mary, Martha, and their brother Lazarus. During the absence of Jesus from the immediate vicinity Lazarus sickened and died. We can imagine how the hearts of those sisters yearned for Christ, who was their dear friend,

during those days of illness. They had witnessed so many of his deeds of kindness and of healing that they would say to each other every day and almost every hour in the day, "If only Jesus were here, I am sure he would but lay his hand upon the brow of our brother and the fever would be cooled." But they were unable to get track of him until Lazarus was dead. Christ immediately responded when their message reached him, telling his disciples that they must go at once to Bethany. When they drew near Martha ran out to meet Jesus, with the despairing cry upon her lips, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" And Christ had a long and remarkable conversation with her. Later he came into the house and asked for Mary, and they came to her and said, "The Master is come and calleth for thee!" And Mary went away to sit at his feet and listen to the great spiritual comfort that came from his lips. Afterward he went with them to the grave and wept with them, but brought back their brother again from the dead. Now, let us not put all this away from us as a thing of the past. With Jesus there is no past; it is always present. He is always God manifest in the flesh. He is forever to all ages Immanuel—God with us. And he is with us to-day, if we invite him, as surely and as tenderly as in any other age of the world.

(I have seen a most interesting story of the

"Black Death." In the year 1353 one of the greatest pestilences recorded in history had swept over every country in Europe, claiming its dead by unnumbered thousands. Men fled in terror from their fellow men, in awful fear of their breath or touch, and for weeks sustained a strange, weird siege in solitude. In their terrible fear men became like wild beasts, refusing even the cup of cold water and the simplest service through dread of contamination.

So it continued until Christmas Eve, when one man in Goldberg, believing himself the only inhabitant of the city left alive, unbarred his door at dead of night, and went forth into the air. He knew that it was Christmas, and as he recalled other Christmases, with their sacred joys and their festivity, he lifted up his voice in a song:

"To us this day is born a child,
God with us!
His mother is a virgin mild,
God with us!
God with us! Against us who dare be?"

As he sang, through a barred door came another voice in response to his own, and then the door was flung wide, and a man joined him in the street and sang with him. Together they marched through the town, giving it its first audible sound save wails and cries of terror since the plague descended upon it.

The song woke strange echoes. From their living tombs men, women, and children came forth to the number of twenty-five—all that were left of the town—and marching through the death-stricken streets, they sang with new courage: "God with us! Against us who dare be?"

Whether it was that the plague had spent its violence, or, which is more probable, that the minds of the survivors were more serene, none of this little band died of the "Black Death." They returned to their homes, buried their dead, and the town began to awake. The incident was remembered, and for centuries the town continued to meet each Christmas Eve at midnight, and at two o'clock march through the streets singing in triumph: "God with us! Against us who dare be?")

III

If you have come to Christmas time with a lonely sense of failure and disappointment, so that you let your heart go out wishing for Jesus, you may be sure of his coming to bless your Christmas and add to its cheer. Do you not remember that time between Christ's resurrection and his ascension, when some of the disciples were together, and were anxious and uncertain, not fully understanding the appearances and disappearances of Jesus, and Peter said he was going fishing? Some of his friends and the friends of Jesus went with him.

They fished all night without success. In the morning, just as the dawn was coming on, they saw some one beside the lake, and he called out to them asking what luck they had had, and they made answer that they had had none, but had been fishing all night and caught nothing. Then the Stranger on the lakeshore shouted to them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat, and when they did so these men, who had been fishing all night without getting anything, found themselves unable to draw the net in because of their great catch. And John, who was next to Peter in the boat, at that moment recognized Jesus, and told Peter that it was the Lord. Peter, in his great anxiety to get to Jesus, swam ashore, and after a little the others brought in the net with one hundred and fifty-three fine fish, and they had a breakfast with Jesus there in the open air by the lake. But they had a love talk with Jesus afterward that was infinitely more delicious than their breakfast.

Are there any disappointed, lonely hearts here who have been fishing all the year and taken nothing? Are you coming to Christmas with a sore memory of the hardships of the year? Is your heart heavy with disappointment and defeat? Listen! The Christ who walked by the lakeshore, where his friends had fished in vain through the long hours of the night, that he might comfort

their morning with success and breakfast with them in love, is your Saviour and your friend also. Do you suppose that those disciples, talking of it afterward, would not have counted that to be the supreme fishing excursion of their lives? So this may be the supreme year of your life if, at its close, after disappointment and defeat and hard experiences, there shall come this Christmas season a new and tenderer fellowship with Jesus Christ, your loving Friend and Saviour.

And we must not forget, if there is in our hearts a keen sense of poverty, and of having but little to do with, that Jesus is able to multiply our little into an abundance. The Christ who took the little lad's loaves and fishes and fed the hungry thousands is the same Jesus who can come into your Christmas time and take the little that you have with which to bless your fellow men and multiply it beyond all your hope.

Jacob A. Riis, whose devoted, Christlike service has been such a benediction to the poor of New York city, tells a story of "Mulberry Street" that I would like to condense for our comfort. It is the story of a widow who had a small income which came from the interest on some government bonds. She had read somewhere that the poor in the city tenements had little chance to know Christmas joys. She said to herself, "One child shall have a Christmas tree," and she cut off a dollar

coupon and mailed it to a college professor to find the child. The coupon looked like a miniature dollar, and as the professor took it from the letter on the morning before Christmas, he said, "Ah, little dollar, I know where you are needed." He went down town to a narrow street with five-story tenements on each side. Entering one, he groped his way through a dark hall to a rear room, where lived six children, and the baby was sick, and the father out of work. But there was a branch of evergreen in one corner which Johnnie had found by a church door. On it hung some colored newspaper pictures and three pieces of colored glass.

The professor brought out the little dollar. "A friend sends you this for Christmas. Buy something for the children and a good dinner for all." The woman hurried to the grocery store and carefully filled her basket, and gave the grocer the little dollar, but he was afraid to take it. As she was sadly putting down her precious basket, a gentleman standing by interposed and gave the grocery keeper a dollar bill for the coupon. As this gentleman went out on the street he met a hackman who had an old horse who had been doing errands in the neighborhood for many years. "See here, Thomas, take this and buy your horse a bag of oats, so he can keep Christmas," and the gentleman passed over the little dollar. The feed-man,

when Thomas bought the oats, sent the little dollar to the pawnshop to see if it were good, and the pawnbroker promptly handed over a dollar bill for it.

Later a young girl came into the pawnshop and asked for the loan of three dollars on a watch. At first the pawnbroker would give but two, but at last he said: "Here, it is Christmas. I'll take the risk." And he added the coupon to the two dollars.

A little later the girl stood at a knit-goods counter picking out a shawl. The clerk objected to the coupon, but took it to the desk. The storekeeper came back and looked sharply at the girl, and then, saying it was all right, graciously attended her to the door. As he stood there a thin voice near by said, "Merry Christmas! here's your paper!" The storekeeper knew the struggle life was to the newsboy, and he said, "Here's a dollar, like yourself; it is small, but it is all right. Have a good time with it."

On reaching home the newsboy found an ambulance in the midst of the crowd at the door of the tenement. As it drove off a little girl was left weeping on the top step. Her father had been taken to the hospital, and to-morrow would be Christmas. The newsboy took a turn down the hall to think. "Here, Susie, you take this and let the kids have their Christmas. Mr. Stein

gave it to me. It is a little one, but it is all right."

There was a Christmas tree in Susie's flat, with candles and presents on it, but the little dollar rested securely in the purse of the charity visitor who had come in that afternoon and had given the children a dollar bill for the coupon, when she heard the story of the newsboy and his sacrifice.

In the evening the professor's wife came home and said to him, "I heard such a story of a little newsboy to-day, at the meeting of our District Charity Committee." And she told him the story of the newsboy and Susie. "And," she continued, "I just got the little dollar to keep." She took it from her purse and passed it to her husband.

"What!" said the professor, as he read the number, "if here isn't my little dollar come back to me! I left it in Bedford Street this morning."

After a moment's pause the professor's wife said, "Jones's children won't have any Christmas tree. He told me this morning he could not afford one. Let us give them the little dollar." And they did, and so the little dollar went on its way, like the widow's mite of old, blessing and being blessed because the benediction of Jesus was upon it. Let us bring what we have gladly and in gratitude to Christ for his blessing.

IV

We must not close without remembering that nothing can be more certain than that if there is one here who is weary of sin and lonely at heart, restless and unsatisfied, and anxious to know Christ, Jesus will surely be his Christmas guest. Do you recall the day when Christ was passing through Jericho? And in Jericho there lived Zacchæus, a tax-collector, who was hated by the people because he had grown rich by unscrupulous dealings. But down at the bottom Zacchæus was not satisfied. He had lonely hours when he longed for love and fellowship. At such times Zacchæus would shudder and say, "I would give half of all my wealth if I knew how to get out of this ditch of selfishness and sin in which I have mired myself." And so one day when the news came that Jesus was nearing Jericho, and the added news that old blind Bartimæus had been healed by him, Zacchæus pressed his way to the front of the crowd to get sight of Jesus. But he was a short man and had no chance until he climbed up into a tree and got his head above the crowd. And then Jesus came along and passed under that very tree. Suddenly he looked up, and those gentle, heart-searching eyes of the Master pierced away down into the heart of Zacchæus, and he said, "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Zacchæus was on the

ground in a moment. Mr. Moody used to say that right there occurred Zacchæus's conversion, "somewhere between the limb and the ground." As Christ and Zacchæus walked away, on every side remarks were made, and bitter looks went with the word, "He is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." But, thank God, that is just like Jesus. He is always ready to go home with a poor sinner if there is a chance to do him good. O sinful heart, this Christmas time may be the time of your redemption. It may be the beginning of a new and glorious epoch in your life. Christ is not only willing to be your Christmas guest, but he is seeking after you, begging for the opportunity.

So I think we can, at the close of our study, agree with the poet as to where Jesus will spend Christmas:

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?

With her of the lonely room,

With visitors few,

One Visitor true,

Will draw the curtains of gloom:

Her face will grow bright

In the heavenly light

Of him whose presence gives songs in the night.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?

Where father and mother smile,

And fair children play

Through the short, happy day,

Remembering Jesus the while.

It will double the glee,
O Lord, if they see
Thy face, as they gather at thy blessèd knee.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
 Away in the heathen land,
 Where loving hearts tell
 Of the Lord they know well,
 Though few the glad news understand.
As their hearts hurry back
O'er the homeward track,
The Master's presence will make up the lack.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
 With the free man and the slave:
 With some on the sea,
 As of old he would be,
 The God of the bold and the brave:
With the sinner who sighs,
And for love's pardon cries:
With the sick—with the one that at Christmas dies.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
 With any who will invite,
 Though lowly the board,
 The Bethlehem Lord.

CHAPTER XXX

THE KINGLINESS OF PATIENCE

The kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.—*Rev. 1. 9.*

PATIENCE is a virtue, or, rather, a grace which beautifies all virtues—which no man ever gets easily. It cannot be inherited from heroic ancestors. No pious mother or saintly father has ever been able to bequeath patience to the son or daughter. Patience cannot be bought. It is not for sale in the market. It is not in any college curriculum. No university will give a degree of this kind. Patience is not a child of prosperity. It comes hardly to those upon whom the sun smiles and upon whom the south winds blow softly. It is a virtue that comes through days of stress and struggle. It thrives in the north wind and defies cold and tempest. It is more often born of grief and sorrow than it is of joy and gladness.

Patience is the blossom and the fruit that blooms and ripens on the storm-whipped tree of tribulation. Paul tells us that "tribulation worketh patience." Tribulation is a tree which grows in the desert of trial, but it is a wonderful blossom and a rich fruit which it yields.

It is a beautiful conceit of the poets to think of the Christian graces as angels who visit us with

blessing and comfort. Bayard Taylor has so conceived of patience. He sings:

To cheer, to help us, children of the dust,
More than one angel has our Father given;
But one alone is faithful to her trust,
The best, the brightest exile out of heaven.

Her ways are not the ways of pleasantness;
Her paths are not the lightsome paths of joy;
She walks with wrongs that cannot find redress,
And dwells in mansions Time and Death destroy.

She waits until her stern precursor, Care,
Has lodged on foreheads, open as the morn,
To plow his deep, besieging trenches there—
The signs of struggles which the heart has borne.

But when the first cloud darkens in our sky,
And face to face with Life we stand alone,
Silent and swift, behold! she draweth nigh,
And mutely makes our sufferings her own.

Unto rebellious souls, that, mad with Fate,
To question God's eternal justice dare,
She points above with looks that whisper, "Wait—
What seems confusion here is wisdom there."

It is in some circles popular to sneer at patience as the peculiar virtue of the poor and the weak. We are apt to think of a man as patient because he cannot help himself, but we could not make a greater mistake. There is no surer indication of reserve force and true greatness than in the exhibition of patience. John spoke well when he coupled the kingdom and the patience of Jesus Christ together. Patience is the most kingly of all graces.

I

Nothing is more impressive to us about the divine character than *the patience of God*. Sylvester Horne, the London preacher, beautifully says that at the heart of God is infinite patience. His forbearance is inexhaustible. His power and pity never tire. He is never moved from his attitude of grace. With all man's rebellious ways and thoughts he fainteth not. His aspect is ever of love waiting to redeem and power waiting to revive. The uplifted Christ upon the cross does not represent a spasm of unusual love and compassion on the part of God toward men, but just the normal, constant, changeless attitude of God's heart. The miracle of forgiveness, as it is the greatest of all miracles, is a daily, an hourly miracle—a miracle of every moment. God is ever blotting out sins from his remembrance—never tiring. It is like the infinite, tireless patience of the sea. The children ply their spades upon the sands to make work for the sea. They heap the sand up, they dig deep into it. Hundreds disfigure the hard, golden surface, and leave their stains upon it; then quietly the old sea turns upon its course, and rolls its waves across the sands, and every trace of stain is obliterated, becomes as if it had never been; when the tide ebbs again there is no trace upon the smooth, shining surface of the sand to show that it had ever known dis-

turbance. Day after day, day after day, the scene is repeated, and the sea is never tired of smoothing things out again; it never complains, it never resents the new work imposed upon it. And the secret is that there is such infinite reserve of power that all that man can do frets it no whit. It is only a question of time and it will put all things to rights again. Again and again, as I have stood by the sea, this sense of patience, of tirelessness, has come over me. Like the God who holds it in his hand, it fainteth not, neither is weary.

It is this infinite patience and forbearance in Jesus Christ which is the greatest manifestation of his kingship. Do you remember when they came to Jesus with the question, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" How many have felt a sympathy with that question! We have felt that, somehow, there must be a limit to what is expected in the way of forbearance and forgiveness. We say to ourselves, you can't expect a man to be always forgiving over and over again forever. Alas! it does not take long to wear out our patience. I have seen a father whom all his world regarded as a good man, and who was esteemed by all who knew him as a loving, patient father, so changed toward a wayward son that he closed his door upon him and wished never to see him again. Mothers come

nearer having a divine patience with us. Usually the wayward boy who has worn out the patience of everyone else, until friends are a thing of the past, has one consciousness left as a last anchor to his soul, that there is one heart that so long as it is above ground will not fail him, and that is in his mother's breast. But even mothers' hearts have drooped and died; and if they have forgiven, they have lost hope even in forgiving. And so we come back to the old question which they brought so long ago to Christ, and ask when we shall be allowed to harden our hearts. But Jesus looked upon them and answered them, "Unto seventy times seven." O, the divine patience of Jesus Christ! In that patience is all our hope.

II

The highest glory of man's self-possession comes through patience. Emerson in his remarkable essay on "power" furnishes us many illustrations of this. He shows that in chemistry, the galvanic stream, slow but continuous, is equal in power to the electric spark, and is, in our arts, a better agent. At West Point the chief engineer pounded with a hammer on the trunnions of a cannon until he broke them off. He fired a piece of ordnance several hundred times in swift succession until it burst. Now which stroke broke the trunnion? Every stroke. Which blast burst the piece? Every

blast. It was a victory of patience. Military men are generally of the opinion that the worst regular troops will beat the best volunteers. Practice is nine tenths. The best school for orators, we are told, is a course of mobs. All the great speakers were bad speakers at first. No genius can recite a ballad at first reading so well as mediocrity can at the fifteenth or twentieth reading. A humorous writer says that the reason why nature is so perfect in her art, and gets up such inconceivably fine sunsets, is that she has learned how, at last, by dint of doing the same thing so very often. Turn anywhere you please, it is the same lesson of patience as king. The great musician will give six hours every day at the piano only to gain facility of touch. The tireless artist will paint six hours a day only to get command of the materials, oils, ochers, and brushes. The masters say that they can recognize a supreme artist in music by seeing only the pose of the hands upon the keys. Always it is the victory of patience.

Self-mastery, self-conquest, is the most kingly thing in a human life. It is the greatest victory which Jesus Christ can help us to win. It can be won only through acquiring the patience of Jesus. If we regard our lives as Christ did his, as of supreme importance to God, and feel that we too are sent of God to do high and holy work,

then we too may acquire the patience of Jesus.

(We have a remarkable illustration of this in the story of Antonio Stradivari, a maker of violins, some three centuries ago in northern Italy. His violins are now world famous and almost priceless. I suppose there are many men who wake music out of them who never dream of the wonderful piety and the patient, worshipful devotion that went into every stroke that contributed to their building.

Now Antonio Stradivari felt himself called of God to make violins. The music was in his very soul. He felt that he was sent of God to do this, and that God could not get along without him. There is a fine poem of George Eliot's which closes thus: "God cannot do Antonio's work without Antonio."

Into his work Antonio put his whole soul, as if he had been ordained from all eternity to do it, and this he regarded as his work for the world and the world's Creator. And, sustained by these thoughts, in spite of all the scorn heaped upon him, his consciousness grew inspired; he did his work with a precision and love and lavish care and tireless patience that a man can give only to work which is conscientiously done for God. Some one mockingly asked him:

"What! were God

At fault for violins, thou absent?"

"Yes;

He were at fault for Stradivari's work."

"Why, many hold Giuseppe's violins
As good as thine."

"May be: they are different.

His quality declines: he spoils his hand
With overdrinking. But were his the best,
He could not work for two. My work is mine,
And, heresy or not, if my hand slacked
I should rob God—since he is fullest good—
Leaving a blank instead of violins.
I say, not God himself can make man's best
Without best man to help him."

"'Tis God gives skill,

But not without men's hands: He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio."

I would to God that every one of us could be possessed with this great feeling concerning our own work. If we felt that way about it, we could be patient. Even God cannot teach a man patience concerning a work which he regards of no value. }

(My good friend, Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, says the greatest thing Paul ever did was when, in the last chapter of Philippians, out of the dungeon, he exclaimed: "I have learned how to be abased and how to abound, how to be full and how to be hungry. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Rejoice, and again I say unto you, rejoice!" That was a supreme expression of patience, but Hillis declares that God can

teach that to the most common heart under the most sordid and trying circumstances. And he tells this story to prove it: A mining engineer who was doing what he could to help in the midst of the terrible confusion and suffering of San Francisco, when for two days she had been shaken by earthquake and despoiled by fire, came upon a little bootblack who had returned to his home to get his brushes and box, but found that everything was in ashes. The big engineer took pity on him and they were soon walking toward a place of safety. Suddenly the little mite of humanity stopped. "Took a long time to git them things together," said the boy, waving his hand toward the blackened columns, "and just one day to put them out! Say, cap!" And now the urchin stopped, put his right arm on the arm of the man, and said, earnestly, as though he were speaking from the depths of his soul a profound conviction—"say, cap, 'tain't no use for a feller to think he can lick God! He can't do it! Just one thing to do—do the right thing, then take things jes' as they come, and act as if you wuz glad!" God had taught this boy, in the hard school of poverty and earthquake and fire, Paul's greatest lesson, which he reached only in his most luminous mood, the supreme lesson of patience! Paul said: "Rejoice, and again I say to you rejoice, whether full or hungry." The boy said, "Take things just as they

come, and then act as if you were glad!" Which is better? I do not know, but I am sure they are close kin.

III

There is not only a thought of power, of reserve force and self-mastery, in this combination of kingdom and patience, *there is also a thought of beauty*. No grace so adorns a king as patience. If we read of some great king, with almost unlimited power and wealth in his hands, that he bears himself with compassion and forbearance and patience toward the poor or the ignorant or the weak, we are filled with admiration and regard. We instinctively feel that this gentle patience is the most kingly exhibition of authority and power. May it please God to teach us this lesson in our own lives! Each of us in his place should be a king. And for us there is nothing that will add so much in grace and beauty to our lives and characters as patience. David learned this truth, though he had to find it in a hard school. How grandly does he sing: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way

unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." And again David sings out of his experience: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

There is no department of our lives where patience is not a kingly grace. How beautiful it is in business life! It is the patient man who, whether he be an employer or an employee, wins glorious opinions from those who have to deal with him in times of stress and heat. In our church life nothing is more in demand than patience—the patience that gives the soft answer that turneth away wrath; the patience that is not quick to resent a seeming insult; a patience which is always looking for the best side and waiting for a clear understanding. Such a patience is

glorious and beautiful in all our social relations. In no place is it needed more than in our home life. There, where we ought to be most Christian, I fear some show to the least advantage the Christian graces. God forgive us if it is so; for, after all, the most important sphere of any man's life, though he be President of the United States or king of Great Britain, is the life of his home. We ought not to excuse ourselves from the closest watchfulness of the Christian character we exhibit in our homes. Nothing will tell there so much for happiness, so much for wise counsels, as patience. In no place is patience challenged so much, perhaps, as among the little details of home life, and in no place, if the challenge be met in a Christian spirit, and the kingliness of patience is shown, is the sight so beautiful. Our earthly homes are so transitory, they change so rapidly, the beautiful fellowship we have there will be over so soon, that we ought to be very, very patient with one another. We shall not have these homes long. If some of us only knew how soon the "Good-by" would have to be said, the frown would fade, the vexing thought would be displaced, and the quick, impatient word would die on our lips unuttered.

They are such dear, familiar feet that go
Along the path with ours—feet fast or slow
And trying to keep pace—if they mistake,
Or tread upon some flower that we would take

Upon our breast, or bruise some reed,
Or crush poor Hope until it bleed,
We may be mute,
Not turning quickly to impute
Grave fault; for they and we
Have such a little way to go—can be
Together such a little while along the way—
We will be patient while we may.

So many little faults we find!
We see them, for not blind
Is love. We see them but if you and I
Perhaps remember them, some by and by
They will not be
Faults then—grave faults—to you and me,
But just odd ways—mistakes, or even less—
Remembrances to bless.

Days change so many things—yes, hours;
We see so differently in sun and showers.
Mistaken words to-night
May be so cherished by to-morrow's light.
We may be patient; for we know
There's such a little way to go.

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